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Prologue

Achterveld, Holland, April 30, 1945

“Konrad,” a member of the HS-9 cell of the Dutch underground, stood with his partner “Pieter” in front of a makeshift camera platform. They were in Achterveld, a small Dutch village near Amersfoort, on the Allied side of the front lines. It was April 30 and they were waiting for the beginning of the Achterveld Conference, a meeting between leaders of the Allied and German armies on the Dutch front, days before the end of the war.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Operation “Faust,” the transportation of supplies by land across the Dutch front lines to feed the civilian population, who were starving after a long, cold winter. The Americans and British had begun dropping aid by air a few days before, but the tonnage was simply not enough. The proposal now was to use Canadian army trucks to ensure a reliable supply. It would be a delicate operation, since the war was not yet over and the German army in occupied Holland was refusing even to consider surrender.

It had been raining all night and the village streets were still wet. All around Konrad and Pieter, Allied staff officers in parade dress stood in small groups, passing time. Above and behind them, on a wooden platform jury-rigged across the cab-roofs of two pug-nosed Canadian Military Pattern trucks, an army newsreel cameraman adjusted his tripod. Everybody was waiting.

The street was broad, like a small Italian piazza. Across from where the two

resistance fighters were standing was the Sint-Jozef Kirk, an exuberant, strangely modern-looking building, with red-brick walls, porthole windows, and steeply angled roofs. To the north was a school building, newer and yet far more austere-looking. Large windows looking into empty classrooms. The blackout blinds were rolled up. Canadian sentries, standing conspicuously without sidearms, guarded a path that connected the church and the school.

A Mercedes sedan turned quickly into the square and pulled up in front of the church, splashing through puddles. It was a former German staff car and still bore Nazi identification plates, with white stars on the doors and trunk and a Dutch flag on the front right fender to announce its new allegiance. A tall, slightly bookish-looking officer jumped out on the driver's side and started towards one of the groups of officers, hand outstretched — a politician's greeting. Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, representing Queen Beatrix and the Dutch Government-in-Exile. He was dressed more eclectically than the other officers: a parade cap and leather bomber jacket over a dirty flight suit and muddy infantry boots. The informality of inherited power.

Bernhard moved among the groups of Allied officers, slapping backs and joking as he went. As he neared where Konrad was standing, the MPs let two young girls and a woman in her twenties through the cordon. They were dressed as for church and carried a bouquet of flowers in their hands. They walked up to the tall prince shyly, the older woman pushing the girls forward. They reached him and curtsied.

"Dear Prince Bernhard," they began in Dutch, speaking formally and carefully in unison, a sing-songy chant. It was a memorised speech.

“These flowers are a gift from the children of Achterveld for Princess Julianna in honour of her thirty-sixth birthday. Long may she live!”

There was a cheer from the crowd: “Hip, hip, Hoorah!” The traditional Dutch birthday greeting.

“Thank you, children,” Bernhard replied, also in Dutch, bending down and patting each child on the head. Konrad, who had deserted from the German navy a few months earlier, could hear the heavy German accent in the Prince’s Dutch. “Princess Juliana asked me to pass on her greetings and those of Queen Beatrix to you and your playmates. God Save the Queen!”

“God Save the Queen!” the crowd answered back, followed by another three cheers in honour of the Princess’s birthday. The girls and the young woman — their mother or teacher, Konrad couldn’t be sure — slipped back behind the sentries.

Suddenly, there was movement across the square. A group of senior Allied officers came out of the church, accompanied by staff and more sentries. They represented five different armies: Canadian, American, British, Russian, and Dutch. Prince Bernhard handed the flowers to an aide, and walked quickly back across the plaza to join them. The officers lined up side-by-side in a row, facing the road. Bernhard went to his Mercedes and leaned against the hood, settling into a posture of careful nonchalance.

A pair of military motorcycles, riding side-by-side, turned into the plaza. A second pair quickly followed. The riders were Canadian military policemen, Provosts. Like the sentries, none of them wore sidearms.

Two large American sedans came next, Packards, in single file. The first pulled up to the church, parallel to, but just past, Bernhard's Mercedes. A sentry stepped forward and opened the back door. A tall German officer stepped out wearing the black uniform of a Nazi political officer, followed by two aides. The crowd standing around Konrad and Pieter hissed: they recognised the Reichskommissar, Seyss-Inquart, himself.

A sentry pointed backwards, directing the Reichskommissar to where the Allied officers were standing. Seyss-Inquart took a step in that direction and then turned, a look of surprise on his face, to Bernhard and the Mercedes. The car, which had been "liberated" by the Dutch Resistance and given to the prince as a present only the week before, had been stolen from him. Bernhard patted the hood ostentatiously and smiled. The sentry gestured again and Seyss-Inquart turned back towards the other officers.

The first Packard drove off and the second took its place beside Bernhard's car. The sentry reached out once again to open the door. This time, three officers stepped out, one after the other. They were wearing the greenish-grey Waffenrock of the Wehrmacht, the German army. The first officer snapped to attention and gave a military salute. A sentry at his side started to raise a hand in return, before catching himself. A Canadian general gave a slight nod in acknowledgement. The other Allied officers remained motionless, under instructions from Eisenhower to avoid according any military honours to German officers. A second German officer stepped forward and repeated the salute. This time nobody on the Allied side moved. Then the third German officer stepped forward. He drew himself up,

paused, and then clicked his heels and threw his right arm out defiantly, stiff and straight. A Hitler salute.

The crowd hissed again. A sentry standing to Konrad's left blew a raspberry. "Nazi cunt!" he mumbled under his breath. Across the square, the Allied officers continued to stand impassively, staring ahead as if the Germans were invisible. A sentry motioned towards the school and the German officers began to walk. A third and a fourth car pulled up, each with officers from a different branch of the German military: colonels from the Luftwaffe. Vice Admirals from the Navy. An officer from the SS.

The last vehicle to arrive was a three-ton transport truck, another CMP. It replaced the last Packard, beside and parallel to Bernhard's Mercedes. A couple of sentries walked to the back and dropped the tailgate. Seven men, all dressed in civilian clothes, hopped down. As they walked towards the Allied officers, one of the civilians turned and waved to the crowd across the square.

"The 'Secret Councillors'," Pieter whispered. He was a Dutchman and had been a member of the cell for much longer than Konrad. "On our side, supposedly. This time."

The "Secret Councillors" were a group of Dutch civilian politicians and civil servants who had remained behind after the Nazi occupation. They ran the civil administration for the Germans, but were also in contact with the Dutch Government-in-Exile — a situation that meant they were trusted by no-one.

As the men passed in front of the Allied officers, Bernhard stood up and stepped into their path. He said something to the men and then signalled to a red-haired

Canadian officer, who stepped out of the line and came towards him. As they spoke, one of the councillors turned slightly towards the plaza, cupping his hands against the wind, to light a cigarette.

Konrad gave a start.

"For fuck's sake," he said, elbowing Pieter. "It's 'Lucky Luke'! Look!"

"Lucky Luke" was the codename the Dutch resistance used for a handsome electrician who had worked with several cells, including HS-9. He was a tinkerer and a scrounger and through his connections he could often get or manufacture weapons or tools that were otherwise hard to get: improvised mines and explosives, blasting caps, even German uniforms and sidearms stolen God-knows-how from God-knows-where.

Luke had been involved in several missions that had gone wrong over the years and was gradually coming under suspicion as a potential collaborator. The proof came when he had arranged to meet with Cor Steen, the leader of HS-9, and "Margriet," one of his deputies, to plan an assassination. The SS found out and were waiting at the cafe where the rendezvous was to take place. Cor had been captured and Margriet managed to escape, but Luke had failed to show up. The assumption was that he'd been pulled by his German masters and was now living in hiding somewhere. The resistance were on the lookout for him. He was near the top of every list of collaborators to be arrested — or lynched — as soon as the war was over.

Pieter was flirting with a pretty young woman from the village by this point and was no longer following the goings-on across the square. By the time Konrad got

his attention and directed his eye across the plaza, Lucky Luke — if that's who it had been — was no longer in view. He had passed with the rest of the Secret Councillors out of sight, behind Bernhard's car and the truck they had arrived in.

Konrad and Pieter stared at the front of the truck, waiting for the Councillors to reappear as they continued their route up to the school. Suddenly, however, there was a jerk and a belch of blue smoke, and the transport truck swung forward, heading in the low gear down the street. When it moved away, Konrad and Pieter could see the civilian councillors. They had been turned around by the sentry and were now walking at right angles to the school, away from the plaza and towards the church. Konrad did a quick count. He could see six men in civilian clothes and Bernhard in his bomber jacket and combat boots. But Luke and the red-haired Canadian officer had disappeared.

"That fucker's escaped again," Konrad muttered under his breath.

Chapter 1

It was October 21, 1966. A Friday. I was heading into work when I heard a familiar voice.

“Sendie!”

I was in a crowd of office boys and secretaries pushing up the Bay Street stairs into the Temple Building, where I had my office at the time. It was a few minutes to nine and the rush was on to catch the last lifts before the workday began.

“Sendie!”

I stopped and turned up toward the spot where the voice was coming from. It called out a third time and I saw her. At the top of the stairs. In front of the big dress-shop window that looked into the Temple lobby. Greta McCrae, the wife of my best friend and biggest client, Fitzpatrick McCrae.

As always, Greta looked like she belonged in the window instead of in front of it. She was dressed in a light woollen coat in a blue that matched her eyes and set off her hair. It had oversized buttons that fastened up to her neck against the morning chill and a hem that stopped a couple of daring inches above her knees. It looked good on her and she looked good in it.

But then she'd look good in anything. She was a beautiful woman.

I was feeling pretty fine myself. I'd bought a new \$200 suit at Harry's the week before and was wearing it for the first time this morning. I'd paired it with a pale-green silk tie, my light-grey Stetson, and some spit-polished Oxfords. Nothing like

Greta, but not too bad for a fella.

I waved back at Greta and called her name. She started down towards me, wading through the crowd against the current. When she got to where I was, she put her right hand on my shoulder and leaned in to kiss my cheek, European style. Pedestrians dammed up behind us, eddying past in a swirl of “tsks” and “sorries.” Greta ignored them, turning me around and tacking us silently across and up the stairs toward Flytes, the diner on the other side of the Bay Street entrance.

I’d been hoping to get an early start on the day. But Greta had other plans.

We reached the top of the stairs, and I pulled open the glass door to the restaurant. Margery, the waitress, looked up as we came in and started walking toward us, wiping her hands on her apron.

“For two?” she asked, looking at Greta.

“Over there. Beside the window,” Greta answered, pointing to a booth looking onto Bay Street.

The breakfast crowd had finished by this point, leaving only a few tables occupied: a group of women waiting for the stores to open and a carefully-dressed young man watching the big clock hanging in the lobby. A salesman, probably. Or interviewing for a job.

The booth Greta was pointing to was far back from the other diners. Marge gave me a secret wink as she led us over and got us seated. She took Greta’s coat and hung it on the stand that separated each booth. Underneath, Greta was wearing a yellow-and-white short-sleeved dress in a thick taffeta, like one of those Mondrian patterns the young women wear, except more expensive. She smoothed her skirt

and slid into the booth, taking the bench on the north side, facing the rest of the room. The salesman turned and stared.

Marge poured us some coffee and pulled two menus from the rack against the window. She gave one to Greta and the other to me. Squeezing me lightly by the shoulder, Marge turned and started back toward the other tables. The salesman looked quickly back to the clock as she caught his eye. We were to be left alone. Two women from the group of shoppers continued to look us over. Marge didn't intimidate them.

Greta glanced quickly at the menu and put it down. We weren't having breakfast. She poured some cream in her coffee and stirred. I waited. She would tell me what she wanted when she was ready.

Finally, she made up her mind. Reaching suddenly across the table, she took my right hand in both of hers, brushing my cup. It wobbled.

"Sendie," she said. "It is Fitzpatrick. I am worried about him."

My lungs started up again and I felt my back slump to its normal curve. It was a business call.

Chapter 2

I've told you that Fitzpatrick McCrae was my best friend and my biggest client. But to understand this story, you're going to have to learn a bit more about how we met and what it is I do for him.

So the first thing you need to know is that I'm a private investigator. A shamus. A dick.

Which sounds a lot more exciting than it is.

If you've seen a movie or read a novel, you already know what people like me do: solve murders that the police won't touch; rescue beautiful women from prostitution rings; help the wrongfully accused prove their innocence.

Except it's not really like that at all. At least not nowadays. Not at my end of town.

I mean, sure, you can find a couple of guys who will do that kind of thing for you — former beat cops and bouncers out in the suburbs who will watch your back, spy on your girl, or tell a blackmailer to back off. Maybe they'll even take on a damsel in distress or look into a murder when you don't like what the cops are saying. They wear cheap suits and worse hats. They work from home and their wives answer the phones and do the book-keeping. It's a tough life and the people who try it tend not to last very long.

Because one of the things you learn in this business is that it *is* a business — and that a business is where you work for clients who can pay you. Which rules out

most dead people and pretty much everybody who gets caught in prostitution rings or is picked up by the police. Work for the downtrodden and you'll find you spend as much time chasing your clients' bills as you do the people you're supposed to find for them. There's no money in voices crying in the night.

To be successful in the investigations business, you need customers who have cash to spend and reputations to protect. Rich people. People who own things. Like mansions, or yachts, or department stores. Or, even better, their lawyers. Half the private eyes in Toronto have their offices downtown in the business district, between Queen Street and Front. There are four of us in the Temple Building. Two next door in the Victory. Another two across the street in the Arts Guild. And that's just this side of Bay and Richmond.

But being a private eye for the rich is not something you break into. The men who can afford Bay Street rates don't like to tell their secrets to strangers. Their lawyers like it even less. To get a start, you have to have gone to the right schools, grown up in the right neighbourhood, or had a good war. Usually all three.

For me, it was a good war. A really good war.

I grew up in a poor part of town — on Edward Street, a little north of Queen, before they started knocking down houses to build the new City Hall. My parents owned a shop that sold newspapers and cigarettes to workers at the Eatons factory. When the war broke out, I signed up with the Provosts — the Military Police.

I had heard enough about 1914-1918 to know that I didn't want to carry a rifle. So I decided to stay out of the infantry, even if that meant volunteering for

something else. The Provosts seemed perfect: overseas but out of the line. Busting drunks, directing traffic, and checking passes. An asshole, but safe. I joined at the beginning of December in 1939 and was on my way to England for training before the new year. I spent the spring in Aldershot and in the summer of 1940 was assigned as Provost Marshall — a kind of Military Police liaison officer — to the 48th Highlanders, an old Toronto regiment.

An old Toronto *infantry* regiment.

I stayed with 48th right through the war. We landed in Sicily in 1943 and fought our way up Italy and then across Holland. But I never did carry a rifle. In the Provosts, you got a revolver. A big old break-action Webley left over from the Great War. I might have hit a barn door with it once. But only because I was aiming at something else.

Chapter 3

The good part of my war was meeting Fitz McCrae. He was the Officer-in-Charge, or O/C, of the Highlanders' Headquarters Company — the men who maintain, staff, and move the general's office when the regiment is in the field. That's the place where the liaison officers — Provost, Artillery, Intelligence — begin their day, so I got to see a lot of him.

The 48th were the swankiest of Toronto's old militias, and McCrae was the swankiest of their young officers. His father was Darcy McCrae, the lawyer and former mayor. His mother was Helen McCrae, née Fitzpatrick, the daughter of the founder of Fitzpatrick Biscuits. So well-off and connected. Fitz went to school at Upper Canada College, university at Trinity, and law school at Osgood. He was articling at his father's law firm when the war began. A different world from me.

There was no question whether Fitz would volunteer or which regiment he'd sign up with. The "Glamour Boys" were a family tradition. Fitz's dad had been an officer in the Highlanders in the First World War. His grandfather had been something similar against the Boers. Fitz was commissioned as a second lieutenant and put in charge of HQ Company as soon as his training was over.

We became close friends during our time in England and Italy. At the end of the war, we were seconded together in Holland to Civil Affairs — the unit responsible for ensuring the smooth transfer of power to civilian hands. We lost touch for a while after I was demobbed, but ran into each other again about a decade later

when I was working for a downmarket investigations business in Montreal. Fitz invited me back home to work with his law firm, and then, after I set out on my own a few years later, started steering his friends and clients — the kind of rich friends and clients you need to succeed in this business — towards me.

It was while we were in Civil Affairs that I introduced Fitz to Greta.

Although we were working for the same unit, Fitz and I were in different sections. Fitz was in Legal, working on the rules governing the hand over to civilian authorities and establishing the post-war order; I was leading a group that was helping to decommission the Dutch underground.

Greta was one of the first people we interviewed. She'd been a law student before the war and joined the resistance after the workers' strike in 1941.

Like most women in the underground, Greta had started out as what the Italians called a *staffette*: a courier and secretary responsible for carrying messages, acting as a lookout, and forging documents. Ultimately she ended up running a safe house for deserters and escapees.

But Greta also took part in direct action, engaging with Nazis in the field. She had a reputation for being ruthless and fearless but also for an ability to put people at ease — the people she was supposed to kill.

Usually she'd go along with the other fighters to help by distracting the soldiers or acting as a decoy. But she could also handle things herself. Once, she told us, she was ordered to kill a man who was suspected of betraying a member of her cell to the Gestapo. She went with him on a date to the movies and then shot him in the back of the head, execution style, as soon as the lights went down. She

dropped the pistol and ended up in the foyer in a crowd of other women. After a quick check of their purses, the Germans let them go, preferring to focus on the men.

A few days after I interviewed her, we ran into each other again. Fitz and I were visiting a speakeasy along one of the canals in Amsterdam and Greta was behind the bar. She and McCrae hit it off immediately. A couple of days later they were inseparable and within the month Fitz told me she was pregnant. They married in November and the baby was born in Holland on the Dutch Christmas, in early December. They came back to Canada in the spring of 1946, and Greta began her new life in Toronto as the young war bride of an up-and-coming society lawyer and philanthropist.

Chapter 4

It was what that lawyer was up to now, twenty years later, that was worrying her.

“There is a problem with Fitzpatrick and I want you to find out what it is,” Greta began in her not-quite-right English. After two decades, she mostly had it, but there was still something slightly off. Something from home that had stayed with her all these years.

“He keeps strange hours and acts bizarre. He leaves for work before I am awake and comes home in the evenings late. We get these night calls, which he takes in his office with the door closed. If I answer, there is never anybody on the other side. But then they telephone again after a few minutes and Fitz rushes to take it up.”

“New case?” I asked. “You know how he is when he’s a new problem to solve.”

“This is not it,” Greta answered. “In fact, he is forgetting things that have to do with the business. His secretary telephoned me a few days ago only to ask if he was at home. There was a client waiting in the office, but he was not there. And he had left before six.

“But it is more than this also,” she continued. “At Thanksgiving he had a terrible fight with Tini. I have never seen him so angry. Tini left the house that night and she hasn’t been back. And Fitz has done nothing to make things better. He keeps saying that he will fix this but he never does. They have not spoken since.”

This was worrisome. Tini, of course, was Greta and Fitz’s daughter — the baby

they'd had in Amsterdam and brought over with them when they moved back to Toronto. She'd grown up as an only child and was now at university.

Fitz had never been a doting father, but he also wasn't a monster. A bit stiff and stand-offish, perhaps, in a way that was old-fashioned even when we were kids. But I figured he was just doing what he'd seen in his own house growing up. The rich, I've discovered, are a lot more conservative than the poor when it comes to family. Maybe because they have a lot more to lose. They drive their kids harder and they get disappointed in them more easily. A lot of my business involves cleaning up after rich kids who've done things poor parents wouldn't think twice about, let alone hire a pro to deal with.

"Well, what do you think is going on?" I asked Greta, stupidly. She wouldn't be talking to me if she knew the answer.

"This is what I want you to find out, Sendie," she replied quickly. "This is why I came down here to see you this morning."

"But I'm a private eye, Greta," I said. "I investigate fraud and recover stolen property. I'm not sure you want me kicking around in your family business."

"Do not be silly," Greta answered impatiently. "I am not asking you about my family business. I am asking you about Fitz. There is something wrong with him. This is why he has his fight with Tini and this is why he is having these calls. There is something that is making him behave this way and I want you to find out what it is."

At this point Marge came over with the coffee pot.

"Can I warm that up?" she asked Greta, pointing at her cup with the carafe.

Greta shook her head and Marge turned to me. I held up my cup and she gave me a refill.

I waited until she turned back to other customers before I spoke again.

“What about an affair?” I was embarrassed to ask, but it was a professional call.

“At six in the morning?” Greta replied. “I think that he would seem happier if he was heading out for a woman. But I also think he’d wait until after I made him his coffee.”

There was a slight pause.

“No,” she began again, definitively. “I am sure this is men. They never speak when I pick up the telephone and Fitz always waits until I hang up when I pass the call on to him in the study. But once when I picked up the telephone to call Tini at the university, I heard a couple of words before they stopped talking. I think it may be foreigners, since they don’t sound like you or Fitz. But you know that I am not good at accents.”

This was a dig at me. When we first met, Greta had school-girl English, but with the war over she wanted to know more. After her interrogation, she asked if I’d be willing to help her improve her English.

“I want to sound like they do on the BBC,” she said to me. The other guys in the room began to laugh.

“You’d better find another one to teach ye, dearie,” one of the older guys told her, a Scot who was working with us. “This one can barely speak th’ language himself on a good day. An’ I fear his lesson-plans may be too hands-on for yer own good, if you know what I mean.” We both blushed. But Greta also never let me

forget it.

We started to get up. I told Greta I'd look into her problem, though I wasn't looking forward to it. McCrae was still my biggest client and my best friend. I didn't want any harm to come to him. But I also didn't want to spy on my paycheque. You earn money in this business when you know whose side you are on. Which in my case is the men who run the law offices and companies. Working for their wives is a whole different kind of business and a whole different kind of detective.

If it wasn't Greta asking, I'd never have considered it.

Chapter 5

The next day was Saturday. Bright and warm for the season. An Indian summer.

My conversation with Greta had stayed with me all day yesterday, and I headed home feeling still troubled. I went to bed early, slept in, and took a slow morning — drinking coffee and catching up with the week's news.

Having grown up in a newsagents, I take my newspapers seriously. I get all the dailies at work and at home. We use a clipping service at the office to keep on top of clients and cases we're working on.

But there's a rhythm to the news that you can't get from clippings. The way different papers put things together on the page. The back and forth of the reporters and columnists. Even the interaction with advertising and the classifieds. You need it all to get a sense of what's going on. It's how opinions are formed. Most people think what they read in the papers. So it helps to know which one they read.

I keep a notebook with me where I write down stories that catch my attention. Once a week I give it to my secretary Nymphaea — yeah, I know: we'll talk about that name later — and she assigns one of the girls to cut out the stories for our files. If I put a star beside something, we ask the service to keep an eye on it.

Other than clients, we mostly follow crimes against the rich, the divorce and bankruptcy courts, and the society pages: the things that produce customers. It's rare that I get a case that hasn't shown up in one of these first and it always

impresses a new client if I know something — but not too much — about what they are telling me. It also saves time and embarrassment since there's less for me to ask about or for them to explain. It's a tip I learned from my first boss, Mike Garvin, when I started out in this business in Montreal in the '50s and I've used it ever since. It's never let me down.

The three main papers in Toronto are the *Globe and Mail*, which comes in the morning, and the *Star* and the *Telegram*, both of which come in the afternoon. Then you've got the neighbourhood weeklies, which aren't that important, and the scandal rags, especially *Hush*, which are. The hippies have a couple of mimeographed newsletters I try to get a hold of when I come across them, mostly to know who's who among the unwashed. Yorkville attracts a lot of middle-class kids nowadays, and rescuing daughters from dealer-boyfriends is a growth part of the business. But the peace-and-love crowd are a small community and it's rare that you can't track somebody down pretty quickly if they disappear downtown. Certainly not my clients' kids — people who come from money and whose parents are prepared to pay. The hippies aren't *that* otherworldly.

Hush comes out on Saturday morning. After I finish my coffee, I usually run down to the corner drugstore, where Louis and Dave keep a copy for me behind the counter. I mostly read it for the "Breeze Around," a kind of society column for the city's underside: who got caught propositioning a cop in the men's room, which working girls have come up from Detroit or down from Montreal, the fights and fancies of the Lavender Hill Mob. It also trades in news about bankruptcies, society divorces, interference cases, and the private lives of reporters. If someone of note

appears in *Hush*, then it is almost certain that I'll be getting a call Monday morning.

My clients mostly read the *Globe and Mail*, an old Tory broadsheet that has always been close to power. It's where the real society column is, the business and legal announcements, and the more respectable classifieds. Better for international and business news than the local stuff people come to me about. Parliament and tea parties with the Governor General, but not who's appearing before the city Magistrate. You can learn about minor royals, who's who in national politics, and which stocks are being touted as the next big thing. But you'll never find out from the *Globe* who can't pay their bills or was charged as a found-in. It's more small talk than gen for me. I read it to find out what my clients think and know, not what they've been up to. The King of Bohemia isn't coming to me for help with his mistress.

My clients' wives read the *Star*. It's a Liberal paper and, as you'd expect given its audience, has a good ladies' section. The main focus is city politics and local news of the non-scandalous sort. This is where you find out about charities, school sports, fashion, and city hall. The *Star* is very concerned about today's youth. There's a bit of union news, especially teachers and nurses. Not much use to me professionally. But it's always useful to know what the distaff side of things thinks.

The *Tely* is a protestant workingman's paper. It was founded by a couple of orangemen in the nineteenth century and is still very Queen-and-Empire. It's owned nowadays by the Bassetts, one of the big Canadian newspaper families. The *Tely* doesn't like the new flag, hates French, and despises the hippies. It loves the Army, Diefenbaker, and Allan Lamport — all the glorious lost causes. And don't

let it get it started on Pearson or his new justice minister.

It's an awful rag but my most useful source. The *Tely* loves the city courts. Nothing pleases it more than a good fall-from-grace story or a spectacular divorce. If your son is up on a drunk-and-disorderly or your daughter on a vag-c, the *Tely* will have it. If your wife gets caught shoplifting, you know she'll get a mention. It's more respectable than *Hush*, and not quite so focused on hookers and homosexuals. But it's full of scandal and its reporters make great sources.

Something else the *Tely* loves is local crime. If there's a murder in Hogtown, it's front page in every paper. But the *Tely* will have a full inside spread with diagrams and arrows and interviews with the neighbours. When they catch the killer, there'll be a picture of him and quotes from people he grew up with. Murders, rapes, armed robbery, and the milder kinds of indecency — the *Tely* loves it all and its readers eat it up. My clients say they don't read the *Telegram*. My job is to make sure they never have to.

The big news today across all the papers, of course, was the landslide in Wales. Early Friday morning, a slag heap had collapsed on a village called Aberfan. Right on top of the local school. It looks like a couple of hundred kids might be dead. They were still digging out the bodies when the afternoon papers went to press.

The *Star* and the *Tely* had the story in their Friday editions. But the *Globe*, which came out too early yesterday, was making up for lost time today. There were interviews with the victims, photos of the slide, the history of the village, and previous warnings about how dangerous things were. A tragedy, of course, but nothing for my notebook. Small talk.

Before the landslide pushed everything else off the front pages, the story in every paper had been the discovery of what was probably Minnie Ford's body up in Lake Couchiching, by Orillia.

This was a bit more in our line. Minnie Ford was the widow of Lorne Ford, who ran a string of gas stations and had been chairman of the Businessmen's Association. He'd been in the Royals in the war, and I'd known him slightly. Well-to-do.

Minnie went missing a year ago or so. But she was always a bit of a good-time girl, and it wasn't clear if she'd taken off to Florida or something else had happened. Last weekend, they'd found what they seemed to think might be her body, wrapped up in some kind of plaster. As the week went on, more details came out: a wooden coffin was found nearby; the body had enough teeth for an ID; the police decided it was Minnie.

As you might expect, the *Tely* was all over this one. It had interviews with her son; with some kids who knew him when Minnie disappeared; and with some neighbours who remembered seeing a trailer that was somehow important now. There were diagrams of the lake. Photos of the house. Photos of her boy, who turned out to be something of a hellion.

Nobody's saying it out loud, of course, but things don't look too good for the son — a hoodlum who spent most of the past three years in juvie and was out the weekend Minnie disappeared. But if it was him, you have to give him credit: packing the body in plaster like that and dumping it in the lake was a smart move. If the water didn't happen to be so low this fall, we'd probably still think Minnie was

off with a fancy man. Looking at the photo, it's hard to imagine he had the brains. A greaser if ever I saw one.

Other than that, it was a slow week. A taxi driver who'd been shot by some hippie girl is back on his feet and getting a new cab. There was a picture of him receiving a plaque from Mayor Givens for helping the police. There'd been a big teach-in at the university about Vietnam. LBJ was egged in Australia. Some schools in Toronto and New Brunswick are going to stop giving students grades. They took the new French sign off the post office in Port Hope (the *Tely* had this one, natch). The Big M, Frank Mahovlich, still hasn't signed with the Leafs for the new hockey season. And plans to unify the Air Force, Navy, and Army into a single "Armed Forces" are still going ahead, despite the objections of everybody from the outgoing commandant of the Navy to the current president of the Daughters of the British Empire.

This week's outrage is that they're going to stop wearing the red shoulder patch once unification goes through. The *Globe* had a photo of Hellyer, the defence minister, getting it from the president of the Women's Army Corp's Old Girls association. But I find it difficult to care that much. I didn't sign up because you got a red shoulder patch.

The last article to catch my eye was a strange one about a couple of German deserters who were executed in Amsterdam right after the war. The story seems to be that they had surrendered to our boys just before V-E day and were sent to one of the camps we'd set up to hold the Nazis who fought to the very end. When the Germans who were already in the camp found out that these two fellows were

deserters, they wanted to try them for collaborating with the enemy, which makes a strange sort of sense, I suppose, since they had been talking to us.

What doesn't make sense is what happened next. We apparently decided that a trial was a good idea and helped set it up. And then, after the Germans in the camp found the deserters guilty, we helped them set up the execution: rounded up a truck and some rifles, drove the deserters and a German firing squad to a rifle range, and let the Nazis gun them down for talking to us.

This all happened when Fitz and I were working for Civil Affairs in Amsterdam, but I never heard anything about it. When the story first broke last month, Hellyer told Parliament that it never happened. But now the *Tely* has found some retired captains out west who remember rounding up the guns and the trucks. So it looks like "didn't happen" isn't going to cut it anymore.

We'll see. I'd say it was all unbelievable, but it isn't. This kind of thing happened all the time in those days, especially as the war was ending and nobody knew what was going on. A week before the executions, we'd been fighting the Germans *and* sending food trucks across the front lines to help feed the civilians who were living under the German occupation. Maybe it just didn't seem as strange then as it does now to be helping those same Germans execute guys who'd come over to our side only a couple of days earlier.

Or maybe it did seem strange but nobody cared. After such a long war, two extra bodies one way or the other just may not have seemed that important.

Chapter 6

After a quiet day with the papers, I was going out Saturday night. It was the Toronto Maple Leafs' home opener, and I was supposed to catch up with Fitz and the rest of the gang at the Gardens.

For years now, Fitz and the boys have organized a pub crawl on the night of the Leafs' first home game. They blame it on the fact that the Highlanders' Pipe Band plays the national anthem on opening night and they say it's a chance to show some support for the old firm. But mostly it's an excuse to put a head on. They start with a lunch down at the Moss Park Armoury and then work their way up through the taverns and hotels on Jarvis, scaring the bums and whores off the street as they go. And the good burghers too, I suppose — if you can find any in that part of town.

After the boys had fought their way up Jarvis, they used to finish around five with some more drinks and a dinner at Le Baron's, a steakhouse across from the Gardens at Church and Wood. Fitz did some work for the owner, an Austrian named Frank Kiss, when he was first setting up and Frank returned the favour by making sure Fitz could always get a table, even when the place was jammed.

A couple of years ago, however, they built a new place inside the Gardens itself, the Hot Stove Club, and we moved the dinner there. If you are a member of the club — and of course Fitz is a member of the club — it means that you don't have to quit drinking until right before you head up to your seats. You can come early,

start putting them away, and keep going until the opening bars of “God Save the Queen” tell you that they’re about to drop the puck. You can also leave an order for a beer and a sandwich or even a steak before you go to your seats in case you get thirsty or hungry between periods. And if things start going tits up on the ice, you can just skip the game and stick with the beer.

The club itself is a strange mix of pomp and hockey rink. It runs down the length of the Gardens on the Church Street side, replacing the old street-level stores. It extends back into the building to just about where the bowling alley used to be, right under the ice. This gives it an odd shape: about three-hundred-foot wide but maybe only ninety-five or a hundred deep. It’s also full of strange hooks and angles. On the Church Street side, three dining rooms are separated by dividers that can be rolled out of the way for a really big event. The ceilings are high here because there’s nothing above you but the green seats and the greys, a hundred feet up. But to get to the bar in the back, you have to go down a couple of steps to get in under the reds, a few feet above ice level. Scattered about are pillars and cement beams that are completely out of proportion to the rest of the room — as you’d imagine, since they are supporting the building above your head. They put wainscoting and mirrors on them to make everything look more clubby, but it still looks like a parking garage disguised as a bordello.

I usually meet the boys for dinner rather than start with them at lunch or take part in the Siege of Jarvisville. No Provost, even a retired one, can look forward to an afternoon running loose with drunken soldiers. But as officers, we were also trained to avoid mixing with the “Other Ranks.” Officers have different messes from

the men and even in the field we were supposed to avoid letting our hair down with the other ranks. Soldiers needed to respect their officers, we were told, and that doesn't happen if they go drinking with you on your days off. Field Marshal Montgomery wouldn't even eat lunch with somebody he outranked. It's peace now and if the unification goes through, there won't even be an army next year. But I still feel uncomfortable drinking with ex-soldiers at these things.

Fitz, I know, feels the same way. He told me once that an officer should be like an older brother: somebody the men look up to, but not somebody they'd chew the fat with. Even though he organizes the reunion, Fitz almost never goes with the boys on the crawl itself. He begins with them at lunch in the Armoury and then later settles up with the bartenders for any damage they've caused. But something always seemed to come up that means he has to leave them for a couple of hours while they do the bar-hopping. I usually run into him just as he is coming in for the dinner.

Tonight, though, was different. I arrived, as usual, just after six. I showed my invitation to the doorman and was waved through. They'd roped off a place for us at the back of the Riverboat Room, but I didn't need to ask where the party was. The roar hit me as soon as I was through the front door.

This time, Fitz was already there, at the head of the table, surrounded by about twenty-five or so of the old outfit. He was wearing a banker's suit, cut slim, and a green-and-black-striped tie, loosened at the neck. His shirt was a light yellow, and the top button was undone. He had a black fedora, pushed back on his head, Sinatra-style. He was pretty liquored up, banging on the table with his stein and

yelling across the heads of the men sitting nearest to him. In the years I'd known him, I'd never seen him like this.

Suddenly he saw me. He stopped mid-bellow.

"Sandy! Sandy!" he started yelling.

"Sandy! Sandy!" one of the younger guys started to parrot. Fitz turned to stare at him. The rest of the table laughed nervously.

He turned back and shouted out to me again. "Sandy! Sandy! Get the fuck over here!" Fitz is not a swearing man, so this was unusual.

I waved and started to walk over to where they were sitting. Fitz jumped out of his chair and lunged unsteadily toward me. He threw an arm over my shoulder and turned to the rest of the table. Greta was right to be worried.

Now that I'd arrived, the men turned back to their conversations. Fitz tried to attract their attention.

"Hey! Hey!" he began. He banged on the table again. "Hey!"

Only a couple of men turned toward him. Fitz clicked his tongue in anger.

"Hey! Hey!" Fitz started to yell again. He smashed his hand down.

"All of you! Shut the fuck up!"

The chatter started to die down. A couple of guys at the back finished a joke with a loud laugh.

"For Christ's sake!" Fitz shouted. He threw a bun down the table, missing the offending group by a couple of feet. "Eyes front, you fucking apes!"

The bun did its job. The laughing stopped and the entire table looked at him in silence. Fitz stumbled against my shoulder. He was very drunk.

"I want you all to say 'hi' to Sandy," he began. "The best fucking guy I know!"

The men looked back at him, confused. The silence continued.

"I fucking said, 'Say fucking "hi" to fucking Sandy'!" he yelled again.

A couple of soft "Hi, Sandy"s echoed back from different parts of the table. Nobody took their eyes off Fitz. The rest of the lounge quieted down as well. The room captain, sensing trouble, started toward us.

"I can't hear you!" Fitz yelled again, far too loud. He cupped his hand dramatically behind his ear.

"Fitz," I began. "It's great to see you. Let me go round and say hi to everybody."

"No! No! No!" Fitz shouted, pressing on my shoulder. "You're sitting right fucking here!" He turned back to the table, picking up his half-empty beer mug again.

"A toast!" he yelled, waving the glass. "To Douglas Fucking Sanderson!" he began. "The best fucking guy I know!" He slugged back the remaining beer.

The men cheered up suddenly. A toast was something they understood.

"To Douglas Fucking Sanderson!" they yelled back. "The best fucking guy we know!"

"Speech! Speech!" somebody yelled from the far end of the table. There was a big laugh. Then they turned back to their conversations. The first plates began to arrive for dinner. I was forgotten.

But not by McCrae.

"Joe! Joe!" Fitz yelled to the room captain as he approached. He dropped back into his chair. "Bring us another chair here for Sandy!"

"It's all right, Fitz," I said, waving Joe away. "There's plenty of space still. Let me

grab a place farther down. We'll catch up during the game."

"No!" Fitz yelled. He pointed to where he wanted Joe to set me up. "Here."

He turned suddenly to the group of men to his left. They were older. Probably from the first war.

"Move down," he shouted. "Make space for Sandy!"

The old boys looked at him in surprise. They hadn't been ordered around like this in years, and certainly not by a younger man. I felt embarrassed.

After a brief pause, the old men sit-hopped their chairs down the table, one after the other, like some geriatric chorus line, making space for me at the corner. Joe pushed in the spare chair, gesturing to me to sit. A waiter arrived with cutlery and a menu. The far end of the table roared with laughter at some unheard joke. I pulled out the chair and sat down. I ordered a beer and took a quick look at the menu. Steak and potatoes, medium rare.

When I finished ordering, the man to my left rose partially, extending his hand. He was very old. He had a thin, grey Clark Gable moustache and carefully combed hair, oiled and parted slightly to the left of centre. He was wearing a Highlander blazer and regimental tie.

"I don't believe we've met," he began formally, introducing himself. Archibald Crawford-Smith. Lieutenant-colonel, retired. Served in the 48th in 1914-1918. Finished with Crerar at Mons. A terrible show. An honour to fight with such fine men.

I don't really care, usually, about what people did in the war – first or second – but I was impressed by Crawford-Smith's equanimity after the way he'd been

treated a few moments earlier. He was asking me what I did when Fitz cut him off. "Archie," he yelled, leaning across in front of me. "I need to talk to Sandy." There was another roar from the far end of the table. But it wasn't about us.

Fitz grabbed me under my arm and pulled me out of my chair. With his hand on my shoulder, he pushed me toward the bar. We stumbled down the steps and stood at a high table wrapped around one of those pillars.

By this time, the lounge was packed and very loud. On regular game nights, it's more like the dining room of a London club: steaks and rye; jacket and tie. Tonight, though, the Highlanders weren't the only ones letting loose. People were standing in smaller or larger groups, the waiters flitting around with trays full of beer. The noise was overwhelming.

I leaned forward over the table and put my head close to his cheek so we could hear each other. "What's on your mind?" I asked.

Perhaps I'd be able to solve Greta's "case" for her before the weekend was out.

"Did you see that story in the paper today, Sandy, about the boys who were killed?"

I was confused but thought he must be talking about Aberfan. Maybe a slow way of breaking the ice.

"Yeah, it sounded terrible," I answered. I didn't think it was a boys' school that had been hit by the landslide. I doubt there were two hundred boys in the entire village.

"You wonder sometimes how people can live with themselves."

Fitz was sounding less drunk now, but I still couldn't understand where he was

going with this. Dead kids are always a tragedy, but I didn't see how this was something we had to talk about privately before the steaks came.

"Well, I'm sure nobody thought it through at the time," I said. "You know how these things go. One day everything makes sense, the next you're knee-deep in bodies."

"I didn't know anything about it," he snapped back. "There was nothing to make sense of."

At this point I was very confused. "Fitz," I began carefully. "I'm not understanding you. It was an act of God, right? Slag heap. Storm. School. Nothing anybody could do?"

Now it was Fitz's turn to be confused. "What are *you* talking about, Sandy?"

I explained about Aberfan. Fitz looked at me blankly. I don't see how he could have missed it. It had been front-page news in all three papers for the past twenty-four hours.

"No, no," Fitz answered. "I meant the boys in Amsterdam. After the war. Shot by the Germans."

Once again it was my turn. It took me a minute to realize what he was talking about. That strange news about the executions. "Right," I began. "The Seaforths. Those men they handed over to the Germans." The Seaforths were a Vancouver regiment and had been the ones running the camp. It was their men who had arranged the executions and supplied the rifles.

I still didn't understand what any of this had to do with us. Or this evening.

"Exactly," Fitz agreed. "The Seaforths. It was the Seaforths. Nothing to do with

us.”

“Not that I know of,” I answered. “But you were in Legal. I was in Interrogations. I didn’t hear anything about —”

“We didn’t hear anything either, Sandy,” Fitz answered, cutting me off. “Nobody called us.”

“The papers made it sound like it was regimental anyway,” I said. “The captains they interviewed said that they called Regiment and somebody there said to make it happen.”

“Yes, that’s right,” Fitz agreed, reassuring himself. “Regimental. Nothing to do with Civil Affairs.”

Suddenly I had an idea.

“The guys were deserters, right, from the Germans?” I asked. “Maybe Greta knew them. She ran a safe ho —”

“Greta knew nothing about it, Sandy,” Fitz said definitively, cutting me off again. “She didn’t know anything, right?”

I decided there was no point in pushing it.

“I’m sure she didn’t, Fitz,” I said soothingly. “Also, it was a long time ago.”

“She had nothing to do with it,” he repeated, insisting.

“Right. Exactly,” I answered. “Greta had nothing to do with it.

“Glad I’m not a Seaforth, anyway,” I continued. “You did a job then, and now this comes up. People forget how confusing things were.”

“Yeah,” Fitz said. “It was confusing. Nobody understood what was going on.”

“No, of course not. I’m not sure they should have helped the Jerries shoot them

like that, but what can you do? Orders were orders and you never knew who anybody was.”

“No, you didn’t,” Fitz said. “You didn’t know who anybody was. Or how they were connected to each other. They could have been anybody who did it. Just bad luck, really.”

I started to agree that it was all very bad luck — perhaps especially for the people they executed — when he interrupted me: “I think I see the waiter with your steak. Let’s go back.”

Surprised at the abrupt change, I let him guide me up the stairs. I’d have to work harder if I was going to figure out what was wrong with him.

“I really appreciate this, Sandy,” he continued as we started across the room. “A bad business. Confusing time. Terrible to see it come back like this.”

Fitz was much steadier now. As we neared the table, he leaned in and said to me in a low voice, “I appreciate you not talking too much about this with the boys — or Greta, if you see her. It’s a really sad story and she doesn’t like thinking too much about those days.”

We arrived back at our seats at this point. Fitz pulled my chair out for me and, with a hand on my shoulder, sat me down. We were finished. He leaned down over my left shoulder and placed a hand on Crawford-Smith’s arm.

“Thanks for letting me have him, Archie,” Fitz began sunily. “I had some important business to get out of the way.”

The old Fitz was back and Crawford-Smith glowed in his light. Happy to oblige, he told us. Work before pleasure and all that. *Tout comprendre*, as they used to

say during the big show. *C'est tout pardonner.*

But that was the problem. I didn't understand a damn thing.

Chapter 7

It was about quarter to seven by the time Fitz and I were finished discussing whatever it was he was trying to tell me. Which meant it was also time for the boys to head up to their seats. Members of the Hot Stove Club have the right to buy tickets in the reds and everything is set up in the lounge to get them to those seats as quickly as possible. Beer-down to bum-down in five minutes.

Up to the greys, however, it is a different question, especially when it involves moving two dozen middle-aged ex-soldiers from basement to ceiling and halfway around the building. Add fifteen thousand other fans and several hours drinking beforehand and it becomes a real challenge: a new operation Gold Leaf — Molson Golden Leaf. The pipers usually start about a half-hour before the faceoff, which meant that our boys had about fifteen minutes to get up to their seats. Fitz, as usual, took command. There was no sign of the bun-throwing drunk from less than an hour ago. I stayed behind to finish my steak while the rest stumbled off upstairs.

Once I was done eating, I raced to the top. I came through the concourse doors a couple of minutes after seven. The Highlanders were already playing below, halfway through “Highland Laddie,” the regimental march.

The light was blinding. The Gardens is normally a gloomy place, but this year they were going to broadcast the games in colour and they’d put in new lights over the summer. I’d never seen anything so bright. The air seemed to glow.

I looked across the stands. Everything was at the same time much brighter and

sharper than usual but, because there were no shadows, two-dimensional. The NHL by Grandma Moses. Even across the arena the light picked out details you wouldn't normally see: buttons, buckles, hat bands.

The lights weren't the only thing that had changed. They'd replaced the old clock that used to hang over centre ice with a new electronic scoreboard that used light-bulbs in the shape of numbers to count down the minutes in each period. On the south wall, where the flag and a portrait of the Queen used to be, there were now seats. Even more had been squeezed into the corners where the owners' box was.

Down on the ice the pipe band was marching in place. The sporrans were a brilliant white as they swung back and forth. Except for the movement, the pipers looked like little lead soldiers, all shiny reds and blues. The ice they were standing on had a strange, slightly bluish tinge. I'd read that this was for the TV, to make the puck more visible and stop the white from overwhelming everything else on the screen. From the stands it just looked odd.

In the benches, the players stood watching. Sawchuk was wearing sunglasses. Some of the other Leafs had put greasepaint on their cheeks, like football players. The home-team sweaters, blue-black under the Garden's old lights, seemed almost baby blue this evening. The Rangers, in their white away shirts and red pants, shone like Christmas trees.

The band started to play "Maple Leaf Forever," the last number before the national anthems. I looked around for a place to sit.

As always, our block of seats was three rows deep. There were eight seats in the back, twelve in the next, and ten in the front. Fitz was sitting up in the front row,

but there was no more space there. In the next row back, there was an empty seat, three in from the aisle, beside Jimmy Clark and Wally McDumont. They stood up as I started toward it, holding the seat bottoms back with their knees. Wally was not happy.

“Yer late,” he growled in his brogue. “Making an entrance as always, I see.”

Wally was a police sergeant who had just been promoted to inspector in the homicide division. In those days, Jimmy was still a patrolman out of 52 Division. He grew up near Peterborough and had been in the Hasty Ps during the war. But we didn’t hold it against him. He was a decent, quiet fellow and I saw quite a bit of him out on the streets in Yorkville. I liked him a lot.

Wally was a different matter. He and I never got along.

Wally’d joined the Highlanders as a private in the Depression and stayed with them right through to the end of the war. When it was over, he demobbed as a lance corporal. This was slow progress through the ranks, especially for somebody who’d been in the front lines since the beginning. But it wasn’t because he was a bad soldier. Wally was a good rifleman and a reliable if gruff mentor for the replacements as they came up the line. Fitz used to say that the nice thing about him was that you could assign a new man to him in the evening and get the same man back, still alive and usually mostly in one piece, the next morning. That was more than you could say for many others.

Wally’s problem was that he hated officers, especially those commissioned right out of university. Or maybe better said, he hated everybody who he thought was “putting on airs” — which seemed to include everybody who grew up outside his

neighbourhood or outranked him. He was very aware of his background and of the class and status of everybody he met. He was quick to take offence and even quicker to accuse people who'd made something of themselves as being "too big for their breeches." Which I guess included me.

In the field, he seemed always to be one step short of mutiny. Without ever quite crossing the line, he found ways to challenge every officer assigned to his company. He'd mutter through briefings and act stupid if he was asked for an opinion. All soldiers grumble, but Wally had a particular passion for complaining about how much more difficult things were for the enlisted men and NCOs and how easy things seemed to go for those who came from the right families.

He seemed to have it in for me in particular. Perhaps this was because I grew up in a neighbourhood no richer than his but was still a commissioned officer. Or maybe he just hated Provosts. He'd pretend not to hear me when I spoke to him, or else say that he didn't understand what I meant. "That's nowt for the likes of us enlisted men," he'd say. "You need to keep it simple. Stand here. Shoot there. We're soldiers, not philosophers, boyo."

Wally's accent was the strangest thing about him. As he never tired of reminding us, he'd grown up on the streets of Cabbagetown, a poor neighbourhood in Toronto just west of the Don Valley and south of Bloor. But he had this Scottish brogue. He was born in Scotland, it was true. But he'd come to this country as a baby.

I couldn't figure out how that worked. The Ward, where I grew up, was about a mile west of Cabbagetown and, if anything, even poorer. And most of the kids I

knew were immigrants too, from China. But even there, where everybody still spoke Chinese, the kids had Canadian accents when they spoke English. Only Wally managed to sound like he'd never left an Old Country he'd barely lived in — and there's just not that many Scots in Cabbagetown to explain it. Maybe he thought it made him sound more working class. Whatever it was, it bothered the hell out of me.

I crossed in front of Jimmy and Wally and sat down. Some young Italian kids were roughhousing in front of Fitz, and Wally was getting more and more upset. "Fucking Eye-ties," he muttered. "Goddamn dagos!"

Jim patted him on the arm and was about to say something when the music stopped. The band marched off the ice and everybody, including the Italian kids, quieted down. The players on the starting lines came on the ice and did a couple of laps before lining up on their blue lines, facing each other this time instead of the south wall like they used to when the picture of the Queen was still there. There was a click and a whir and a small platform with two flags on it came down from the scoreboard. Spotlights shone on each of the flags, and a fan positioned between them on the platform blew up enough wind to cause them to flap a little. Beside me, Wally started to laugh. "What in God's name do ye call that?" he asked, speaking to nobody in particular. Jimmy tried to shush him as the audience stood for the national anthems. From behind the boards in the Leafs end, we heard the opening bars of the "Star Spangled Banner." There was a small cheer when it ended and they moved on to "God Save the Queen." They finished and the players did laps while the linesmen checked the nets. The audience sat down. The teams

lined up. The referee dropped the puck. The game was on.

Chapter 8

Things started pretty well for the Leafs. Keon lost the initial drop to the Rangers' Berenson and his teammate Gilbert took the puck quickly into Toronto's end. But Pronovost got it back for the home side and pushed it up to Eddie Shack, who was at centre ice and racing towards the Rangers' goal. Shack skated with the puck down into the far corner and then threw it back out in front. Maniago, the Rangers' goalie, swung at the pass, knocking it onto Charlie Conacher's stick. Conacher slapped it right back for the Leafs, taking Maniago by surprise. Goal! Thirty-eight seconds and the Leafs were up 1-0.

For a while, things kept going the Leafs' way. Keon put a second one in for the home team from Douglas at 5:10 and Red Kelly got the third for the Leafs from Ellis and Stanley at about twelve minutes. Maniago got a stick in the mouth a bit after that and there was a short break while he got a stitch at the bench.

And that was pretty much it for the period. The Rangers got one back a couple of minutes later (Gilbert from Goyette and Hillman), and then everybody decided they'd had enough. They batted the puck back and forth for a couple more minutes waiting for the referee to blow the whistle. Nobody was taking any chances.

New York was feeling more energetic when they came back out for the second period. Gilbert got a second goal for the Rangers at 4:46. Conacher got his second for the Leafs two minutes later, but then it was New York for the rest of the period. Gilbert put a third in at 12:10, and Hillman tied things up with a long slapshot just

before the buzzer sounded.

They decided not to use the third period. The two teams came out when the referee blew the whistle but everybody just skated around in circles for 20 minutes. The ice was getting worse and the puck was bouncing around like a rubber ball, more lacrosse than hockey. By the time the final whistle was blown, it was hard to tell who was happier that things were over: the Leafs, the Rangers, or the fans.

We started filing out, and Fitz caught up with me as we headed down the stairs.

"Sandy," he began, putting his hand on my shoulder. "I'm really glad we had that talk."

"If it was good for you, Fitz," I began, still not understanding what he wanted.

At that moment, the Italian kids came running past. One of them bumped into Fitz, pushing him into me. I grabbed the railing as we started to fall, twisting over my wrist and banging my head against the wall. Fitz fell into me, his weight pushing me hard up against the railing. I managed to stay upright, but my hand and head were killing me.

"What the fuck!" the kid who bumped into Fitz yelled at us. "Watch where you're going, old man!"

Fitz had started to stand up, and the kid half punched, half shoved him again. He fell back into me, pressing me into the railing. There was a sudden commotion, a thud, and then a yelp of pain.

"Watch where yer goin' yerself, sonny!" Wally's brogue boomed out.

Fitz stood up again and I turned around. Wally was standing between us and the Italian kids. One of them was sprawled out on his back on the steps, head down.

"He punched me," the kid yelled, pointing at Wally as his buddies started to pull him up. "That fat fuck punched me!"

"Don't know what yer on about, me man," Wally said. "Ye were rough-housing on the stairs and bumped into this poor gentleman here. I tried to hold ye up, but ye were too far below me."

The kid started to say something else, but Wally had pulled out his badge. "Away the lot of ye," he said dismissively. "It's an accident the noo, but I wouldna hesitate to bring ye in if it turned out to be more than tha'."

The kid's friends started to drag him away. "You fucking pig!" he yelled back at Wally, once he was out of arm's reach. Before Wally could reply, the gang turned and started running down the steps. They turned the corner below us. "Assholes!" came a final yell.

"Like your fathers before ye!" Wally yelled after him. And turning to us: "The glory of Italian manhood in full retreat!"

He looked at Fitz.

"How are you doing, sir? Did he hurt you?"

"I'm fine, Wally. Fine," Fitz answered. "Just a little shaken."

"I'm fine too," I added to nobody in particular. "My wrist's a bit sore, maybe."

"Aye," said Wally. "Well, it would be, wouldn't it." I wasn't sure what he meant.

Fitz picked up our hats, which had fallen off in the tussle. He gave mine a quick brush and handed it back to me.

"Thanks, Sandy," he said. "You saved me a bad fall there."

He put his own hat back on. I rubbed my wrist. We continued on down the stairs.

"Should never have let those dagos in," Wally began. He was a step behind us, speaking between our heads. "The wains are as bad as the ol'uns ever were. Give me a hippie any day over greasers like them."

Somehow during our time in Italy Wally had come to hate the Italians with a passion and I never really understood why. The Italian army was not much of a factor when we landed in Sicily and they had surrendered before we even made it to Messina. It was safe to say that, despite the fact that we invaded their country, they literally never did anything to us once they got over the initial surprise.

"I don't know, Wally," I began. "I don't see them as being much worse than any other young people these days. There's no respect from any of them, I'd say."

"Aye, well you don't see them the way I do, Sandy," Wally said. "When I was working robbery, it was pretty much Eye-ties all day, every day: gangsters and hoodlums, the lot o' them. Far worse than anything we saw over there."

"If I've learned anything in life," Fitz interjected, "it's never ask a policeman about how safe the city is. You see the worst in them, Wally. I never had any problem with them, here or there."

"Aye, sir," Wally answered. "But you've got a rare gift for coming out on top, haven't ye? The rest of us have to work in the trenches, sir, an' it's different doon here."

"Well, you'll know more about it than me, Wally," Fitz said, bringing things to a close. "I'm sure you're right. But don't hold this too hard against them. Just a bit of horseplay."

"I'd check me wallet if I were you, sir," Wally answered. "I wouldna put it past the

wee shits.”

Involuntarily, I felt my breast pocket. Everything in place. We were on the lower concourse by this time heading toward the Carleton Street exit. I looked around. The Italian kids were nowhere to be seen.

“Sandy,” Fitz began again. “Are you taking the subway home? Do you want a drink before you go? We could stop here in the lounge or head over and see what’s open by the College Street station. Make sure you’re all right.”

“I’ll be fine, Fitz,” I said. “Just a little sore on my back and wrist. You’re not getting any lighter.”

“And you’re not getting any younger,” he replied. We were out on Carleton by now, and the men started to congregate around us.

“Right, boys,” Fitz said, addressing the men. “A great evening, except perhaps for the game. Dileas gu brath!” The motto of the 48th Highlanders: “Faithful forever!”

“Dileas gu brath!” the men shouted back. A cab pulled up heading south on Church. Fitz waved at it, and it turned the corner toward us.

“Let’s catch up next week,” he said to me over his shoulder. “I’d like to discuss things further with you.”

He moved toward the taxi. A couple beat him to the door and started to pull it open. The driver waved them away. “Mr. McCrae?” he asked out the window. Fitz acknowledged the greeting and stepped in. He closed the door and I watched as the cabbie pulled out into the Carleton Street traffic.

After they were gone, I headed off on foot, west on Carleton toward the College

Street subway station. I'd have to catch a train up to Bloor and then across to Bay for the Avenue Road bus. It was an awkward connection, and normally on such a fine evening I'd have walked it. But I was feeling the pain in my wrist and back.

A couple of hundred yards up, I saw the Italian kids again. Across the street at the mouth of an alley. They were smoking and passing around a paper bag. Probably a mickey of something. I hoped they wouldn't see me.

As I came closer, one of them ran out to the curb and slapped his right arm up against his left. "Vaffanculo!" he yelled across at me. I ignored him and kept walking. The other kids laughed.

"Hey! Stronzo! Asshole! Yeah, you!" he called. I felt my back tighten but kept ignoring him. He pulled down on the cheek under his eye. "Watch out, you dumb fuck! You and your buddy! Occhio!"

The other kids laughed again and slapped his shoulders. Then turned as a group back into the alley. The booze was more interesting than me. I let my shoulders down and released my fists. I felt a cold sweat suddenly down my spine as the adrenaline ebbed. My wrist and back were sore again. Worse than earlier.

The northbound train pulled into the station as I came through the turnstile. The smart move was to run down and catch it, in case my young friends changed their minds and decided to come after me. But I let it go. I was stiff and tired, and still shaking off the tension of the past couple of minutes. And I was bothered by Fitz. After playing him to a draw in the bar, the rest of the evening felt like a loss. He wanted something. I just didn't know what.

When the next train pulled in, I had my pick of seats. I sat down. Let the red

rocket take me home. And then a long night in the tub.

Chapter 9

When Monday morning came round, the Leafs had lost their return game, down in New York, on Sunday night and I still hadn't learned anything for Greta about what was upsetting Fitz. I resolved to do better.

What did change, however, was the news story Fitz had been going on about at the game Saturday evening. That blew wide open.

It started on Monday, when the *Globe* interviewed the same two Old Seaforths that the *Star* and the *Tely* had on the weekend. But the *Tely* had found another former captain out west who also remembered setting things up. He said that he'd put in a call to Second Division HQ to check whether what they'd been told was correct. When he asked for written orders before carrying out the executions, he was told that there was no time. Things had to be dealt with that evening, May 13.

On Tuesday, the *Globe* reported that the government was sending a lawyer from the Air Force to Europe to interview the Dutch and Germans involved. The *Tely* had a story saying that as many as twelve Germans might have been shot in the same fashion. They also said that the whole thing was organized by a Canadian "General Witt." According to the Germans, at least. But in the same article, reported that the Ministry of Defence said there's never been a "General Witt" in the Canadian Army.

The *Globe* took Wednesday off, but we learned from the *Tely* that there might also have been a secret diary — the reporter wasn't sure if this was in English or

German, which makes you wonder how he knew about it at all — and that this diary might contain everything we needed to know about the case. Which in my experience seems to be characteristic of secret diaries, until you discover they don't exist or they don't tell you anything. The *Tely* also published a translation of the original article from the German magazine *Der Spiegel* this fall that had started everything.

Thursday was when the ass-covering began. The *Globe* had the Canadian ambassador to West Germany complaining that it was all a “teapot tempest,” since we were killing Germans all the time in those days. The *Tely* managed to get interviews with Vokes, the O/C of the Canadian Second Division at the time; Stein, the ranking German officer in Holland; and even old Monty himself. Turns out none of them knew anything about it, as they'd all been out of the country that day. Which is either quite a coincidence or demonstrates that generals are terrible at coming up with alibis. I've arrested found-ins with better excuses for why their pants were around their ankles.

On Friday, the *Globe* told us that Hollis, the Air Force investigator, was back and already writing up his report. Apparently it would say that we'd done nothing wrong. So nothing to see. But in another story, the *Tely* interviewed a German guy who was running a dry cleaners down in Hamilton and who'd been a POW during the war. It turns out he remembered the trial well. He said that the Canadians had the execution spot already picked out and were waiting with the rifles before the Germans had even found the deserters guilty.

The former POW also had one piece of news that I hadn't seen anywhere else:

the fact that the older of the two deserters, Rainer Beck, had not said a word during the trial. While the younger one, Bruno Dorfer, had tried to defend himself and begged for mercy after the verdict was reached, Rainer had done nothing to counter the case against him and showed no resistance, even when he was being loaded into the truck taking him to his execution. The POW said it was like Beck wasn't even interested.

"It was like he knew it was no use," the dry cleaner said.

Chapter 10

After a week of reporting, the newspapers had done what seemed to me to be a pretty good job getting all the pieces of the story in place. There were still a lot of problems with the overall picture, but they weren't at the reporters' end. Unless they'd got something very wrong, the trouble all seemed to be back in '45. The sailors who were ultimately executed, Beck and Dorfer, shouldn't have been in the POW camp; they shouldn't have been tried by the Germans; and they certainly shouldn't have been shot by them — with or without our help.

But just as importantly, Fitz and I should have known something about this. The definition of who was and who was not a POW was exactly the kind of thing Fitz was working on for the civil authorities. And interviewing deserters, especially those who'd been connected to the underground the way these two seem to have been, was what I was supposed to be doing. It was how I met Greta — who, as I've said, ran a safe house at the end of the war for people like Beck and Dorfer — and it was how I should have met the German sailors. But the papers had nothing about either coming into contact with Civil Affairs and I had no recollection of meeting them. If I had, I'd certainly expect to remember it. The work we did with the people we investigated was very detailed and it tended to stick in my mind. To this day, I could tell you a lot about most of the people we spoke to.

Given where we were in the story, I expected to read more the next week. Hellyer was clearly wrong — maybe even lying — when he said that the Canadians

had not been involved in the executions that week at the end of the war. Having found several members of the Seaforths and at least one ex-German POW who remembered the case, the papers should have been following things up. Who else knew something about the trial? Who was this General Witt? How is it possible that people who had worked with us and the resistance during the war could be tried and then executed with Canadian help?

But there was nothing else. The next week, the stories dried up – just as quickly as they'd started the week before. Hellyer mumbled something in Parliament about a thorough investigation being needed — confirming my suspicions about the one they'd just completed. And Diefenbaker, leader of the Opposition and scourge of all things Liberal... agreed that this was best. Which must have been the first time he's ever agreed with anything Pearson and his crowd have said or done.

But it was the fact that the newspapers went quiet that surprised me. The *Star* had a couple of opinion pieces about it, and the *Tely* had a staff report about four Germans who'd been sentenced to death in Medicine Hat during the war because they killed some fellow prisoners at the POW camp in Lethbridge for “collaborating” with the guards. But there was nothing more on what actually had happened in Amsterdam in the spring of 1945. Having chased this story for a week and gone head-to-head daily for new leads and interviews, the reporters suddenly all gave up at the same time.

This is not how newspapers work in Toronto. When there's a story going, they compete for it. You're more likely to see things that are only tangentially related — like the *Tely*'s staff story on the executions in Medicine Hat — than have obvious

questions go unanswered. So the fact that all three newspapers all dropped the story seemed doubly strange. Stories just don't die like this. I couldn't be the only person who thought that things had got more rather than less suspicious as the week went on.

I decided to find out what was going on. From the war I vaguely knew Bill Thackery, who was covering the story for the *Tely*. I figured I could call on him for a favour. Thackery was a famous old reporter who'd started out with Hemingway at the *Star* in the 1920s, covered the Spanish Civil War for the *Globe* in the '30s, and ended up reporting from the field as the voice of the CBC at the end of the war. I hadn't realized he'd moved on to the *Telegram*, but if something was going on behind the scenes, Bill would be the guy who knew. A couple of hours at the Imperial, at an average speed of two beers an hour, and I had no doubt that I'd have the inside scoop.

I called him at the beginning of the next week, but he wasn't in. I got his girl instead. I left a message and she said she'd get him to call back.

When I didn't hear anything the next day, I called the newsroom again. I got his girl a second time.

"He's not been in since you called," she said. "I left him a message, but I guess he hasn't picked it up."

The third time I called, I'd had enough. I told the girl that I really needed to talk to him.

"Listen, man," she said. "I left him a message. I can't help it if he doesn't show up to work."

I was glad she wasn't my secretary. I told her it was about these execution stories from the war.

"Ahh. That's different," she answered. "If it's about the execution stories, then maybe you'd better talk to me. Bill's, ah, 'indisposed'" — there were quotation marks in her voice — "and I did most of the research and writing anyways."

"Me" turned out to be Marty Fordham, the other reporter who'd been covering the story at the *Telegram*. I didn't realize he was a she. "It's short for Martha," she told me when I asked about it.

"Bill started calling me Marty when I began working with him," she explained. "It's supposed to be what Hemingway called Martha Gellhorn when they were married. Bill says that he knew them both, and that I remind him of Martha."

Since Martha Gellhorn is a famous war correspondent, I started to tell her that it was quite the compliment, coming from somebody as experienced as Bill Thackery.

"Actually, I think it's the tits," she said, interrupting me. I didn't understand.

"I mean, I think it's because me and Gellhorn both have tits," she added, filling the silence. A women's libber, I'm guessing.

"Or maybe that we both have tits and can write sentences — you know, the whole girl reporter thing."

If I've learned anything in my life, it's that there's no point arguing with angry young women, especially not when it comes to how they are treated by men. I decided to stay *stumm*.

"Anyway, whatever it is, it's definitely got something to do with tits."

She was enjoying saying the word, shocking me.

"It's all he ever looks at when he's talking to me. I'm not sure he could pick my face out of a lineup."

She stopped, letting me ponder this. *Vive la différence* is what I thought. "Uh-huh" is what I said.

"Well, I will say this, at least," she continued after a moment's silence. "Marty's a way better byline than Martha when it comes to getting people to return your phone calls. They just don't bother if they think you're a chick. But it's different if they think the chick is some guy's secretary." I blushed, having made the same mistake myself.

"'Sugar-coated bullets', as Mao would say," she added.

"I guess," I replied.

I had no idea what she was talking about.

At this point, however, it seemed, the test was over. Either I passed or she felt her point was made. Because she suddenly opened up. She talked a bit more about the execution stories and asked me what I knew about Amsterdam after the war. After some back and forth, she proposed meeting up in the Walker, a grand old hotel at Front and York, just up the street from the *Telegram's* offices and across from Union Station.

"I'll even buy you a drink," she said. I said that I never said no to a drink. Especially from a reporter. With tits. But I only thought that last bit.

I got to the bar a little early and so ended up buying my own drink. I arranged for a booth along the north wall, looking onto Front. I ordered a beer, left my name

with the bartender, and took my seat facing the door.

Marty arrived just as the clock struck three, exactly on time. The door opened and a tiny young brunette came into the room. She took a couple of steps over to the bar and called to the bartender. He turned around and pointed over toward me. She strode across the room — if somebody as small as she was could be said to “stride” — hand outstretched. I slipped out of the booth and took off my hat. After our telephone conversation, I took pains to keep my eyes on her face.

“Miss Fordham?” I asked as she arrived at the booth.

“Marty,” she replied, shaking my hand with a grip that would have put a man twice her size to shame. She was dressed in the new unisex style: cowboy boots, jeans, turtleneck, and a leather jacket. The only nods to femininity were a purse, a belt that looked like it was made from giant brass bracelets, and a ponytail.

And, of course, the similarities with Martha Gellhorn that Bill had noticed. They stood out to me too.

She was, if anything, even smaller up close than she looked across the room — no more than five-foot-one, even in her cowboy boots. She was also even younger-looking. I knew she had to be at least in her mid-twenties, given her self-confidence on the phone and the fact that she worked for one of Toronto's biggest and most important newspapers. But looking at her now, I'd have guessed that she was no older than eighteen. If you'd told me that she was still in high school, I'd have believed you.

She let go of my hand and climbed up into the booth opposite me. I waved the waiter over and asked Marty if she wanted something to drink. When the waiter

arrived, Marty took a two-dollar bill out of her purse and laid it on the table. "Boilermaker," she said, looking up at him. "Molson and Five Star. Make the Five Star a double."

The waiter was the old-fashioned sort who'd probably worked at the Walker since the 1930s. He raised his eyebrows in surprise at Marty's order and looked at me for confirmation. "She's a reporter," I explained. "It's thirsty work." That was enough, apparently. He turned around and returned to the bar with our orders.

He returned a few minutes later with the shot glass and beer stein. Marty reached up and took the rye off his tray before he had time to put down the felt. She leaned back and threw the rye down her throat, slamming the shot glass down on the table as the waiter put down her beer. Wiping her lips with her hand, she coughed lightly. "Just what I needed," she said. She picked up the beer and took a deep gulp. I raised my own stein and took a sip.

"Right," she said. "The end of the war."

Chapter 11

We talked for a couple of hours.

I started by telling Marty that I'd been in Amsterdam at the end of the war and had been involved in dealing with deserters. She asked me what I thought had happened and so I went through everything I'd been able to learn from the papers thus far.

After I finished, she told me that I'd done a better job than she had.

"Even with that bit from the *Spiegel*, I was having a hard time putting it all together."

She pronounced *Spiegel* incorrectly, using an *sp* rather than a *shp*.

"I could tell that there was something bigger going on, but I couldn't really follow all the connections," she said. "I was six years old when the war ended, and so have no sense of how things were. I don't even really remember my father being away."

We spoke then for a while about her father, who had died last year. He'd been in the Dieppe raid and had been captured by the Germans. She could see now, she said, now that kids her age were having their own families, how broken hers had been by her father's experience — how normal families interacted with each other, what normal fathers did with their children. But growing up with it, that had been her normal.

"He was mostly a very quiet man," she told me. "But he couldn't bear to be

bored. He had to have something to do. He turned mean when he got bored.”

She told me that her parents had had a cottage in Halliburton County and that as a little girl she used to bring detective novels with her to make sure her father had something to do for the entire weekend.

“He’d bring a book and the newspaper, and maybe *Time* magazine or *Life* or something, but it was never enough. He’d sit in his chair in the main room from Friday evening after we got there right through until Sunday evening, when we’d pile back into the car. And he’d do *nothing*. No swimming, no canoeing, no hiking, no birdwatching. Nothing. He’d finish the book and the magazines he brought with him by Saturday afternoon. And then he’d drive the rest of us mad if we couldn’t find something else to keep his mind occupied: interfere with my mother in the kitchen, pick fights with my brother or me, complain about the neighbours, the villagers, the government. It didn’t really matter. Just something to keep things going.”

I told her to have some sympathy.

“The war was only twenty years ago,” I said. “That probably seems like a long time to you, but the time is coming when decades won’t seem that long to you anymore.” I felt old and ridiculous as I said the words, but they were true.

“For me,” I continued, “the war sometimes feels like yesterday. There are days when I wake up and I don’t know where I am. I can smell the blood and the mud and the cordite, and I have a momentary panic before I realize that it’s all gone and those days are over.”

“My father also had these terrible nightmares,” Marty answered. “Or rather the

same nightmare, over and over again. He never spoke about it to us, but we could see it, even if he fell asleep in his chair on an afternoon. He'd yelp and groan and mumble the way a dog does when it's deep in sleep. And then he'd jerk awake and pretend that nothing had happened and that nobody had noticed. It was our mother who told us what was going on. The same nightmare, that he's not allowed to move until he learns a new language."

She asked me if I had anything like that tied to my time in the war.

"I do," I said. "I also have a recurring nightmare, except in my case it's being trapped in a room. The MO" — I saw a momentary look of confusion on her face and so explained that that meant the medical officer, the regimental doctor — "is yelling at me to clean off the stretcher for him, but I can't get it off the floor. We're in Ortona — or rather nearby it — but it also isn't Ortona. It's also just a room."

I paused, trying to remember if there was anything else.

"Really, that's it. It isn't even that scary when I tell you about it, and it both does and does not feel scary when I'm in the middle of it. But it also terrifies me. I'd say that I'm lucky if three days go by when I don't have some version of it. And then I wake up, or dream that I'm awake, and the nightmare passes."

"Do you know what the dream is about?" Marty asked. "My dad's was pretty specific, and you can figure out what it must have meant. He was captured on the beach at Dieppe, of course, and I always figured it was about getting taken prisoner."

"Well, Ortona's a real place," I said. "It was the worst battle I was in with the Highlanders. And the MO was a real person — in fact, he was killed just before

Ortona, when a shell hit our aid station. But I don't think the dream itself means anything specific — and I'd be surprised if your father's did either. I think those kinds of dreams are more about how things felt than what actually happened. At least that's what's true in my case. I wasn't there when the MO was killed, and while I'd help move the stretchers occasionally, I never had to clean them."

I'd finished my beer by this point. I picked up my glass and pointed to it, catching the waiter's eye. Marty was about halfway through her quart.

"How about you?" I asked. "Do you want another?"

"I better not," she said. "I like a drink, but when you're the size of a tennis ball, you gotta watch the volume."

She tilted her head upwards and pointed an arm to the ceiling as if she were speaking to a crowd.

"'Oppose extravagant eating and drinking and pay attention to thrift and economy'," she said, addressing the room.

"Mao?" I asked.

"Yup," she answered. "There's one for every occasion."

Chapter 12

As we waited for the waiter to return with my quart, Marty brought the conversation back to the execution stories.

“Actually, I think this whole business is why you’re talking to me and not Bill,” she said.

“When we first got started on this story, Bill was very enthusiastic. He doesn’t like Pearson or especially Hellyer, and he thought this was something he could use against them. We knew that Hellyer was lying almost from the beginning and it wasn’t that hard to find those ex-captains out west who remembered the entire story.

“But after we did, Bill suddenly lost interest in the whole thing. It was like he just didn’t want to know any more. When we found out about Werner — that’s the German guy in Hamilton — Bill asked me to drive down and interview him. And when we got the translation of the story from the *Spiegel*, he didn’t even want to read it.”

The *speegel* stuff was getting on my nerves. “It’s ‘Der SHPeegul’ not ‘the SPeegel,’” I said, interrupting. “‘Der SHPeegul’. *Der* means ‘the’ and you say *Spiegel* with a *shp* sound in German.”

“Good thing I’m not German then,” she said without losing a beat.

I made a note not to be such a pedant.

“The point is,” she continued, emphasizing the word *point*, “that I haven’t seen

him since. He called once, smashed out of his mind. But that's it."

I asked her if that was why the stories had dried up.

"Well, it's part of it, of course, since Bill just knows so much more about all this than I do. But it isn't the only reason. In fact, Bill wasn't the only one who suddenly seemed to lose interest. After I came back from Hamilton, Gus, our editor, told me he was getting tired of the stories too. 'It was so long ago,' he said to me. 'And such a garden-variety fuck-up. I just don't think anybody else wants to hear about it.'

"I said that I thought there was more to it than that," she continued. "And also that this really wasn't a garden-variety anything. But then he went all Old Man on me, just like you did, and said that it was because us 'kids' just didn't understand how you sometimes have to do things in a war. I asked him if he'd ever heard of this place called Vietnam. I think my generation knows quite enough about what you 'have' to do in a war, thank you very much." She was getting fired up.

"Not every soldier is a baby-killer, you know, Marty," I answered quietly. "Sometimes you gotta realize that bad stuff just happens. We used to call it a SNAFU: 'Situation Normal, All Effed Up.'"

"That's what he said," Marty replied. "'There's just no rhyme nor reason to it, Marty,' he said, 'and I don't see what we gain by pulling it all back into the light.'"

"I certainly know how he feels," I said. "As crazy as Vietnam seems, I almost feel more sorry for the American soldiers than for the Vietnamese. For civilians, war is something that happens to you. For the soldiers, it's something you do. To others. You can't know what that's like if you haven't done it. Kill people. Or hurt people —

and hurting them is worse than killing them because we feel sorry for wounded animals in a way we don't for dead ones — because you were told to."

"Well, I still think this is a big story," Marty answered, "even if Bill's on a bender over it, my editor doesn't think anybody wants to know, and you think the children of Vietnam deserve to be napalmed. Sure, it was a long time ago; and sure, you and your buddies are old men now. But those two guys they killed were young — and they killed them after the war was over and the killing was supposed to stop. How can that be right? How can that be a mistake?"

Apart from the "old men" quip — I'd just turned fifty and felt far from my golden years — and the fact that I didn't think the Vietnamese deserved to be napalmed, I agreed with her. Even if it was going to hurt people, the executions were a big story. And it really wasn't right what happened to Beck and Dorfer. They'd turned themselves over to us. We owed them our protection, not help to their graves.

The question for me, though, was whether it was my business. My life is complex enough without getting involved in things that don't concern me and where nobody is willing to put up some cash.

But of course things aren't as simple as that. I'm also looking out for Fitz, because his wife asked me to and because he's my friend. I haven't seen anything about Greta's "foreigners," and I still haven't had a chance to talk to Tini, but this execution thing really did seem to worry Fitz. And maybe me as well. We weren't involved, but from where I'm standing that looks a little like the problem: we were there, in Civil Affairs, and we should have heard about it. If Beck and Dorfer were really deserters, my guys should have interviewed them. And if the Germans were

going to try and execute them, Fitz should have been asked.

And what Marty said was right. The fact is that they were young men — and that because of what our boys did, they would stay that way. That wasn't right even if it was a mistake. That's something I learned in the Army. Everything is an accident, except the coverup.

But something else I learned in the Army was that not every mistake was mine to fix. A lot of times you just have to shake your head and be glad you're not caught up in it. In this case, I really had no idea what to think.

Marty jumped off the bench and stood in front of me.

"Let's keep in touch," she said. "I think you know this isn't over."

I grabbed a felt from the table and turned it over. Pulling a Bic out of my pocket, I wrote my office number down.

"Here," I said. "If you get any more leads or think of anything I can do to help, give me a call. I'm not sure I've got much to add, but it's a sad story. And by not being involved, I feel like I was involved."

"EM 4-6364," she read out mockingly. "Not quite ready to give up the old exchange, are we?"

"Hell, this is the new exchange, as far as I'm concerned, young lady. I miss the old Elgin number."

"I think I was in high school when they switched that one out."

"Not all change is good, Marty, no matter what they say in the papers."

"Dust will accumulate if a room is not cleaned regularly'," she replied.

"Indeed it will," I said.

Chapter 13

By this point, I figured I really had to do something about Greta's case. I'd met with Fitz, but he'd had nothing for me. Since I could hardly put a bug on his line to listen for "foreigners," I figured the next best thing would be to track down Tini. I was still feeling a little hurt that she hadn't contacted me after she left home. So this would be a chance both to help Greta and catch up with my favourite "niece."

She turned out to be hard to find. Greta told me that she'd moved in with her girlfriend from the university and gave me her name and number. So one day after work I decided to drop in and check up on her. I walked the couple of blocks west to Osgoode, then took the subway up to Museum. Tini's girlfriend, Karen Abernethy, was supposed to be in one of the women's residences in the centre of campus, along St. George, just south of Hoskin.

This is an area I'd never really been to before, even though it's only about a half-hour walk from my apartment. When I was growing up in the 1920s and '30s, the area around St. George north of the university was like a different country, a quiet two-lane road leading away from the university and home to its better-off professors and deans. These were not the kind of people we saw in my parents' newsagents and we were not the kind of people they wanted to see walking past their front gates.

Things got a little less quiet after they widened St. George in the late 1940s. But it was still a university town. The fraternities began to buy out the professors and a

number of other places were converted to rooming houses, student residences, research institutes, and restaurants and bookstores focused on the college trade.

The real change started about five years ago when the university started expanding northward. They knocked down the St. George apartments and a couple of old houses on the south side of Harbord to build a new lab and started expropriating the buildings on the north side for a new library. A lot of the houses and shops are now vacant as a result and the few that haven't been boarded up — a couple of hard-living fraternities and some rundown boarding houses squeezing out their last returns before the wrecking ball — are no longer being maintained. What was once a world apart from my old neighbourhood was now starting to look more and more like it — and about to share the same fate in progress's cause.

The residence that Greta had told me Karen was living in was kitty-corner from where the new library was to go. There is a frat house there now, where they will be putting it up — an old mansion that has seen better days. Across the street to the north of the residence was a Catholic student society and, to the west, the new Zoology building. Since I was coming from the Museum station, I cut across the university's back playing fields and came into the quadrangle from the northeast. I'd never been in this area before and so it took some time to find a way in. I ended up having to go all the way around before I found an entrance on St. George itself.

Whitney Hall is a Georgian-looking building of the kind we saw a lot of in England: long, two-and-a-half-storey in red brick with a grey slate roof and dormer windows. I jogged up the steps and pulled the main door open. There was an entrance hall with a glassed-in porter's desk and a small office to my right. At the

end of the vestibule, what was evidently a hallway ran perpendicular to the entrance. The lights were on in the porter's vestibule, but nobody was behind the desk. I strode over to the window and called out. I waited a few minutes and, when nobody came, tapped the bell. Some muffled noises came from the back office, and then it fell quiet again. I decided I'd waited long enough and would take my chances in the hallway.

I'd got a step or two away when I was called back. A young woman was coming out of the back office, tucking the front tail of a man's work shirt into the waistband of her jeans. She was maybe five-foot-five, with extremely straight, long black hair that fell heavily over her shoulders, crowned by some kind of Indian-looking brown leather headband. The shirt was unbuttoned almost to the middle of her chest. She wasn't wearing a bra, but by pulling the shirt down tightly, she managed to keep things under control.

"Can I help you?" she asked, leaning around the door to the porter's vestibule. There was what sounded like a rustle and a giggle from the office behind her.

"I'm looking for Tini McCrae," I said hopefully. "She's supposed to be living here."

"Your daughter or something?" she asked.

"Of a friend," I said. "She's the daughter of a friend of mine."

"She doesn't live here," the girl answered immediately. "There's nobody called Tini here."

Another giggle from the back office.

I asked about Tini's friend Karen. "She was going to stay with her for a couple of

days while she found a place to live.”

“I think I might remember a Karen,” the girl said. “Tall girl, right? With red hair?”

I told her that I’d never met her before and so didn’t know what she looked like.

She looked at me suspiciously.

“Yeah, well, I’m pretty sure she moved out back in September,” she answered.

“Maybe she dropped out or something.”

I asked if there was some kind of directory of residents I could take a look at, just to check.

“Nothing you can see, man,” she answered. “This is a women’s residence.”

This time there was a definite laugh — a man’s — from the back office.

“Well, maybe you could look for me,” I said, staying as polite as I could. “Even just to check whether she moved out the way you think.”

The girl sighed audibly and turned to the porter’s desk to her right, inside the vestibule. Sitting down in a squeaky wooden chair, she pulled out a large three-ring binder and started turning through the pages. I stepped back to the window, and she pushed the binder farther forward on the desk, hiding it from my sight under the edge of the counter.

“It’s gonna take a sec, man,” she said. “The girls are listed by room number instead of by name.”

I watched her page slowly through the binder. Now that she was sitting, her shirt hung a little more open, and I could see her breasts quite clearly. I turned my head to the side, giving her some privacy. She noticed and, clicking her tongue at me, pulled the top of her shirt closed.

Finally, with a smack, she slammed the binder shut.

"Nope. Sorry, man," she said finally. "Like I said, no Karen Abernathy. Either she moved out or you got the wrong place. She don't live here. With or without a friend called Tini."

She started to stand up, tucking her shirt in tight again. I asked her if I could use the phone on the desk to call Karen's number.

"You can't use this one, man," she said, sliding the chair under the desk and backing away from me toward the open office door. "It's for the residents."

There was a fourth giggle from the office behind her.

"There's a payphone just outside the front door," she said. "Free to anybody who's got a dime."

She disappeared back into the office and I pulled open the front doors, heading back out into the street.

There was another giggle — a girl's this time — and a short sharp laugh.

"Some old perv," I heard the girl start to explain as the doors closed behind me. "Like a total square."

Chapter 14

The payphone was on the wall beside the door, just like the girl at the desk said. So I pulled a dime out of my pocket and called the number Greta had given me for Tini's friend. A man's voice answered.

"Yeah?" he said.

I said I was looking for Tini McCrae or Karen Abernathy.

"Who's asking, man?" the voice asked.

I told him my name and explained that I was a friend of Tini's parents. That I was hoping to get in touch with her, to see how she's doing.

"If she wanted you to know, man, she'da told ya, doncha think?" the voice replied. I was starting to get tired of rude hippies.

"Well, can you just tell me that she's all right then, so I can let her mother know," I asked, keeping my temper.

"Who?" the voice asked again.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Karen or Tini, man? You asked about both."

"Tini," I said. I guess he had a point.

"You gotta ask her yourself, man," the voice said. "I'm not running a message service for runaway chicks, you know."

"That's why I'm calling," I answered. "So I can ask her."

"O.k. But she doesn't live here, man."

"Who?" I asked. Now I was the one running in circles.

"Karen, man. She's never lived here. I don't even know her."

"Okay, but Tini does live there. You do know her?"

"Yeah, that's right. I know her. But she ain't here."

A path forward, I think.

"Right now, or never?" I asked.

"Whaddya mean?" the voice asked.

"Tini. Do you mean she 'ain't here' right now, or she 'ain't here' never?"

"Whoa," the voice answered. "I gotta think about that one."

He paused for a second.

"I think 'right now.' Yeah. She ain't here right now."

"But she is there sometimes."

"That's right, man. She's here sometimes."

"So she does live with you."

"Tini, you mean?"

"Yeah, Tini. The girl I'm calling about."

"Well, not with me, man. I just know her, like, you know?"

"But she still lives there, right? Where you live?"

"Yeah, man, that's right. She lives here. Where I am. But like in a different room, you know? With Mike."

"Got it," I answered. "So where do you all live?"

"The coop, man."

"What's 'the coop'?" I asked.

“It’s where we live, man. Like you asked. Me and Tini and Mike. And everybody else. We all live here.”

“And where’s ‘the coop’?” I asked again.

“Two up from Delta Tau, man. You can’t miss it.”

And with that he hung up.

Chapter 15

The payphone I was using wasn't in a booth. It was just attached to the wall. A chain was hanging down that used to hold a directory, but the directory was missing. I debated heading back to the Temple or up to my place to look up "the Delta Taus." But since I was right on campus, where the frats were, I didn't want to leave without at least trying to track down the house where Tini was supposedly staying. I was also a little worried that she seems to have lied about being with Karen.

I headed back into the residence. Presumably they'd have a directory in the porter's vestibule.

There still wasn't anybody at the window, so I walked up and rang the bell right away. Might as well get it over with.

This time the girl didn't even bother coming out of the back office.

"What?" she yelled out to me.

"Me again," I answered back. "I wanted to see if I could borrow your directory."

"How come?"

"To look up an address," I answered. "My friend's daughter is living at 'the coop,' whatever that is."

"It's just up the street, man," the girl answered. She still hadn't come out of the back office. "Beside the Delta Taus."

"Okay, but where's that?" I asked. "That's what I want the directory for."

"It's like across the street, man," the girl yelled back. "Third house or something on the other side of St. George. You can't miss it. You don't need a directory."

I turned around and went back out onto the street again, heading up to the corner and crossing over as the girl said. It wasn't the third house up, but she was pretty close — there was a frat, a university-run residence, and then a couple more frat houses, the last of which was the Delta Taus. The next house was the university's housing office, but the one after that was 'the Coop' — or "the Co-op," as an adult would say.

The Co-op was a heavy, old burgher's house. Stockbroker gothic, except probably built for some early scientist or philosopher, in a very dark-red brick. A semicircular tower rose up the front right as you looked at it from the street — presumably the original parlour on the ground floor and a sitting room or study on the second storey. A large sign stood out on what was left of the front garden. "Campus Co-op Housing: America's largest student-run housing co-op."

I walked up to the front door and pulled on the doorbell. Nothing happened. I pulled again. Nobody came and I didn't hear a sound. So I knocked.

It turned out the door was on a two-way hinge without a latch, so it swung a little as I knocked. I pushed it open and took a step inside. Once again there was a kind of vestibule, though this time without a porter's desk. There was a blackboard on one side and a corkboard on the other. The chalkboard had some names and phone numbers written on it and a message saying that the "Rochdale finance committee" should just head into the main office. The corkboard was like the classified section of the newspaper, except without the classification: rooms for

rent, somebody looking for a lift to Sudbury in exchange for helping drive and some gas money. A litter of kittens available. At the far side of the vestibule was another door. A heavy metal fire door that clearly had been installed more recently. I reached out and turned the handle. Unlocked.

I went into the main hallway. To my right, where the parlour used to be, was the main office. The place where the finance committee was supposed to meet. To my left was a door marked "toilet." Ahead on the left was a stairway leading to the second floor. A long corridor was straight ahead, heading toward the back of the house, where presumably there'd have been a dining room and kitchen in the days when this was still a single-family dwelling. Bicycles were leaning against the wall all the way down the corridor.

There was a flushing noise from my left followed by some splashing as whoever was in the washroom used the sink. A second later the door opened and a young man came out, wiping his hands on his jeans. He was a little on the chubby side, and a bit old for a student — maybe about thirty. He had a round face, with a parson's beard and a lopsided grin. A Greek fisherman's hat was pushed back on his head, revealing a prematurely receding hairline.

He looked up and saw me.

"Can I help you?" he asked. Finally, a polite hippie.

"I'm looking for Tini McCrae," I answered.

"Cop?" he said, looking me over warily.

"Friend of her mom's," I answered. "Just checking that she's all right."

"So not a cop then," he answered, nailing me down. Polite but insistent.

“Not a cop,” I said.

“I don’t think she’s here right now,” he said, having got this out of the way. “But you can take a look.

“She’s either in the office here,” he said, pointing at the wall behind me. He turned to the stairs, “Or she’s up there, in Mike’s room. If she’s here, that is.”

He saw my questioning look. “Room 201,” he said. “Mike’s in Room 201. Top of the stairs, turn right. Right above the office here.

“But I’d start in the office at this time of day,” he continued. “She’s probably working if she’s here at all.”

The two of us crossed the hallway, and the young man pushed the door to the office open in front of me.

The office was a large room — a former parlour, as I’d suspected — with desks pushed against three of the four walls. In the middle of the room, a kitchen table was surrounded by a half-dozen chairs of various kinds. Several stacks of paper stood on the table. Young women were sitting at typewriters at two of the three desks. Two young men sat at the main table, smoking and speaking quietly. They looked up as we entered. Plans for some kind of high-rise were laid out on the table in front of them.

“Girls,” the young man announced as he entered, “have you seen Tini today? Her stepdad’s looking for her.”

“She’s not supposed to be working today, Dennis,” one of the girls answered before I could clarify that I wasn’t her “stepdad.”

“I haven’t seen her since last night.”

Dennis, the man who greeted me in the hall, then turned to the two young men at the table. "Poncho, Pigpen. Have either of you seen Mike today?"

"No, man," one of them answered. He was tall and dark and had a slight accent, so I'm guessing "Poncho."

"He's not been around for a couple of days. I think he went home to visit his folks." That would be "Pigpen."

"Well, there you go, sir," Dennis said, turning to me. "Not around. Want to leave a message?"

I said that I did, and Dennis called over to the girl nearest us.

"Hey, babe, can you take down a message for us? For when Tini gets back?"

And then to me.

"Leave your number with the girl, here, and she'll make sure Tini gets it."

The girl turned in her chair toward me, grabbing a steno book.

"Who shall I say is calling?" she asked in a remarkably formal tone. She was wearing some kind of hippie shawl and a miniskirt that barely covered her bum. But she spoke like a bank president's secretary.

I gave her my particulars and she promised to pass them on. So I said my goodbyes and headed back out into the hallway. Another young man was coming through the fire door, dressed in the student uniform of dirty jeans, a ragged T-shirt, and what looked like a wool-lined jeanjacket. He was pushing a bike ahead of him that had some kind of shopping bag hanging from the handlebars, making it difficult to get through the door.

"Sorry, man," he said as he came through.

I pushed myself up against the wall and let him pass. Then headed out the door and into the evening air.

Something solved, at least, I thought to myself. I knew where Tini was.

Chapter 16

I decided not to say anything to Greta until I had actually spoken to her daughter. It was a little disturbing that she'd lied about staying with her friend Karen, and I wanted to check that she was all right before I considered the case completely closed.

I waited a day to see if Tini would call. She didn't, so the next evening I dialed the number Greta had given me again, which I knew now was the Co-op.

This time I got a woman on the phone.

"I think she's at work this evening," the young woman said. "Lemme check."

There was a banging noise as she let the mouthpiece of the phone dangle against the wall. In the background I could hear people moving around and some low tinny-sounding music. Something about lovers changing or rearranging. In a minor key.

"Yeah, not here," the young woman said, returning to the phone after a minute. "At work."

"Can you tell me where that is?" I asked.

"El Patio," she answered. "On Yorkville."

The Cafe El Patio was a basement coffee house and discotheque in the heart of the hippie district. It was a bit less famous than some of the more popular places, and tended toward a younger crowd. By day it was a coffee shop, by night a dance hall, with live music.

I decided to head over and see if I could speak with her.

It had been a mild day in the mid-fifties, but with fog and showers. I looked out the window of my apartment and saw that the rain had stopped. There was still a bit of fog, but I figured since it was a nice evening and El Patio was at the Avenue Road end of Yorkville Ave, I'd take a chance on the walk.

I got to El Patio about ten. It was still pretty early for the university crowd, so I didn't have to line up. The door was open and the music was pouring out into the night air. A Beatles song from last summer. A poster beside the door told me that the act was a local band, Stitch in Thyme.

A huge young man was sitting on a bar stool just inside the entrance. He was dressed in chinos and a varsity sweatshirt. Buzz cut. Football player. He stretched out his legs as I came to the door, blocking the way.

"Whatchya looking for, man?" he said, giving me an appraising look that started with my shoes and ended with my hat — my regular dark Stetson.

"To go in?" I answered. "See the show?"

"Not your crowd," he answered. "Teeny-bopper night. The Senator's downtown."

The Senator is a jazz club and steakhouse that caters to businessmen. More people had arrived while we were talking and a line was starting to form.

"Maybe I'm just a fan of rock and roll," I said, figuring either the doorman or the kids behind me would get tired of the holdup.

"Yeah, sure looks like it, man." He pointed with his eyebrows at my hat.

There was a pause.

"Come on, man!" one of the kids behind me yelled. "Shit or get off the pot."

"Let's go!" another kid yelled. As I suspected, the crowd was getting restless.

"Whatever," he said finally. "All right. It's a buck-fifty cover." He held out his hand.

I got out my wallet and pulled out a couple of ones.

"No change," he said.

I put one of them back and pulled some coins out from my pocket. A quarter, two dimes, and a nickel. How you could not have change on a door-charge of six bits was beyond me. Maybe he couldn't count that high.

The doorman took my money and dropped it through a slot in a small table standing to his right. He moved his feet out of the way and let me pass. I got a push in my back as the kids behind me started jostling to get in.

I've no idea why anybody would name Cafe El Patio after a patio. The name sounds expansive and outdoorsy, like the kind of place where you could enjoy a small cup of dark coffee while listening to a street musician play his violin. But in reality, it's just a dingy basement: two long rooms divided by a heavy cinder-block wall that runs right down the middle. The floor is covered with dirty, industrial-looking linoleum tiles in a black-and-white checkerboard pattern. The outer walls are covered in a kind of dark-brown burlap or some other kind of coarse cloth. The centre wall, which I guess is what keeps the house above standing upright, has been painted with a dull-black paint — the kind you'd use to paint a stage floor — and then "brightened up" with what looks like snakes or maybe worms painted on sloppily with gold or silver spray paint. The look is basically "high school photography club."

At each end, the centre wall stops eight or ten foot short of the outer foundation: at the far end, against the back wall, a low stage fills the gap, allowing the band to play to both sides of the wall simultaneously. At the front end, the gap serves as a kind of connecting corridor, the passageway by which customers and staff move back and forth between the two parallel spaces. It looks like and surely must be a firetrap.

A tiny entrance hallway — no more than two or three paces — separates the doorman from the first space. In the afternoons and early evenings, this is the café, with small round bistro tables and strange rustic chairs made out of what looks like firewood. At night, they pushed the tables against the walls to clear the main floor for dancing.

It was still early enough that the room was nearly empty. A young couple was dancing over in the far corner, beside the stage. The woman was wearing a light-brown or gold-coloured jumper, over some brown corduroy pants and cowboy boots. Her partner was in what looked like a dark-brown or black sport coat and dark-green velvet pants. Dirty white frilled cuffs extended from the sleeves of his coat. He was wearing sunglasses shaped like tiny stop signs.

The couple was dancing go-go style. They were standing about two feet apart, facing each other. The girl had her arms up like she was in a stickup, thrusting in and out with her hips and chest. Her eyes were closed and she was shaking her head back and forth, swinging her shoulder-length brown hair across her face. Entranced.

Her boyfriend was less carried away by the music. He looked like he was

walking in place, moving his feet and hands back and forth in small steps, left-right left-right, while snapping his fingers more or less in time to the music. Mostly he was watching the girl.

"Can I help you?"

I was interrupted by one of the waitresses. A tall girl in her twenties in a green mini dress. She had red hair, which was done up in a bouffant Jackie-Kennedy-style hairdo.

"I'm looking for Tini McCrae," I said. "I think she works here."

"What?" the waitress asked again. The music was loud.

"Tini McCrae," I said, louder this time. "She works here."

"Cop?" she shouted back at me. These hippies and their cops. Are they all dealing drugs?

"Family friend," I answered.

"You'll have to catch her at home, then," she answered. "Customers aren't allowed to hassle the waitresses."

She turned and started looking for the doorman, who was facing away from us at the moment.

"Forget about it," I said, turning toward one of the empty tables against the wall.

"Let me just sit here and have a coffee then. Black."

I mimicked holding a saucer and cup.

"Milkshakes and pop only once the dancing starts," she said. "Don't want any burns."

I ordered a Coke, and she turned away to collect orders from the other tables. I

sat down. A steady stream of customers had been coming through the door, and the place was starting to fill up. Couples, mostly, in their early twenties or late teens. Occasionally an older couple, or a group of girls, or a lonely-looking young man on his own.

After about ten minutes, I realized that my waitress had not come back. I stood up in place and looked around. I couldn't see anybody who looked like they worked here — other than the band, of course, jammed up on the tiny stage across the back of the room.

They were playing a slower song at this point and through the now larger crowd of dancers, I could see the couple I saw when I first came in. They were swaying together on the dance floor, in what looked more like a hug than a dance. The young man moved his right hand down below his girl's hip, cupping her bum-cheek. She reached down with her left hand and pulled the boy's back up, positioning it once again on her waist.

There was a tap on my shoulder.

"Mr. Sanderson."

I looked up and Tini was standing at my shoulder, with a small tray in her hand. A red paper cup was on the tray with a straw.

She was wearing a short sheath dress in a heavy fabric — roughly the same shape and cut as the one her mother had been wearing when she came to the Temple back in October, but much younger-looking. It was a print in several shades of purple, olive, white, and orange, running through each other — like blades of grass or some kind of psychedelic jungle, except more abstract. Her

makeup matched the dress: Twiggy-style eyeliner with white-and-orange eyeshadow; a slightly orange lipstick.

My best friend's daughter. Tip-sexy.

"Your Coke," she said, interrupting my thoughts. She took the paper cup with her right hand and placed it on the table in front of me. "Karen told me you were here. We switched tables for a bit."

Ahh, I thought. *The elusive Karen Abernathy*. So at least she exists, even if she isn't living with Tini.

I pointed at the empty chair across the table.

"I can't really," she said. "Not when I'm working."

She looked over her shoulder at the front door. A large crowd was lined up, trying to get in, keeping the doorman busy.

"Well, for a second," she said, slipping into the chair across from me.

"I've been trying to get in touch with you," I said, leaning over to her. The band had started a new song: Cannonball Adderley's "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy," except in a rock-and-roll arrangement and much faster tempo.

"I heard," she said. "But I didn't know it was you. They thought you were some kinda cop at the Coop. Or maybe a perv."

Fucking paranoid hippies, I thought to myself. *They're going to get me arrested one day*.

I didn't say anything, though. I wanted to keep her talking.

Tini looked back over the dance floor and then back at the front door.

"Listen," she said. "I can't talk right now. I gotta get back to work. Let me call you

tomorrow. Or early next week.”

I reached into my pocket and pulled out my notebook. I opened it up and started to write down my phone number for her. A man suddenly appeared at our table.

“Get back out on the floor, Tini,” he said without any introduction. He was the same size and shape as, but different from, the guy at the door. Another football player. In the same uniform: crew cut, chinos, a polo shirt instead of a sweatshirt. “Karen can’t handle both rooms on her own.”

He turned to me.

“It’s time you left, Pops,” he said.

“I’m a friend of the family,” I answered. “Just giving her my number so we can catch up later.”

“Sure,” he said, not believing me. “But she’s working right now, so you gotta leave her alone.”

Tini was on her feet at this point. I ripped off the piece of paper with my number on it and offered it to her.

She waved it away. “I already got it, from your message back at the Coop.”

She turned back to the room. “Nice seeing you, Mr. Sanderson,” she said over her shoulder.

And then demonstratively: “Say hi to Mom for me.”

The man and I watched Tini’s back as she threaded her way through the dancers.

“She’s too young for you anyway, man,” he said.

I started to protest, but he cut me off.

"Drink's on the house," he added, pointing to my cup. "So long as you leave. Now."

"All right," I answered, holding my hands up in surrender. "Turns out it's not really my crowd anyway."

"Nah," he agreed. "You'd do better at the Legion."

Chapter 17

Tini didn't call me the next day, but I'd seen enough of her and her situation to give Greta a call.

"I saw Tini," I said to her after we got the greetings out of the way. "She's living in one of the Co-op houses on campus, and working there and at a place called Cafe El Patio."

"Did she look all right, Sendie?"

"I didn't really have a chance to talk to her, but she seemed all right to me. We're supposed to meet up next week."

"I am so happy to hear this," Greta answered. "I have been worried since it has been so hard to get her on the telephone. Every time I call her apartment, I get somebody new and they don't know where she is."

"Well, I dropped by and it looked okay. It's a student residence, and so maybe not as clean as you'd like. But safe enough, I think. Apparently the students own and run the building."

"I will tell Fitz," she said. "He will be happy to know she is all right."

I debated for a second whether I should say anything about Karen or this "Mike" she seemed to be living with. On the one hand, I didn't want to get between Tini and her parents. But on the other hand, I could see Greta getting annoyed if she discovered from somebody else that Tini was living with a boy rather than a girl.

"It's a pretty casual place, Greta," I began carefully. "So I think they move

around a lot. When I called them, it sounded like this Karen had moved out, but that Tini was still living there. You know, sleeping on couches and that kind of thing.”

“Oh, this is all right,” Greta said. “I am sure that the other girls do not mind.”

“Well, it's a co-ed residence,” I said. “With boys and girls,” I added, not sure if Greta knew what *co-ed* meant.

“Ah well,” Greta said after a second's pause. “As long as she is safe.”

There was another pause.

“Maybe we should not say anything about this ‘co-ed’ to Fitz, Sendie. He is a little old-fashioned in these things. It might not help.”

I agreed and hung up.

It had gone better than I'd hoped.

Chapter 18

I took most of the weekend off. There wasn't much in the Saturday papers. Neo-Nazis elected in West Germany and another on trial in Toronto. U.S. troops in Vietnam hit 375,000. The Teamsters and the Transit Union were duking it out over who got to represent subway workers. No real scandals or major crimes.

The Leafs had also been on something of a streak. Since a loss the week before last, they'd won two home games and tied their only away game, against Chicago — the top team in the league — who they then went on to beat at home in the return matchup Wednesday night: 6-3. A pretty win.

Tonight they were at home, playing Boston for the second time this season. They'd tied them the last time, a month ago, before Mahovlich agreed to a new contract. But Boston's new defenceman, Bobby Orr, had also gone on a scoring streak since then, so both teams were doing better. It looked like the game was going to be something else.

I'd tried to get tickets but there was nothing available. Orr was the Beatles of hockey, it seemed. Even the scalpers were refusing to sell. I read in the *Globe* that his father had barely managed to get a ticket himself. Last game, he'd had to watch from the press box. I asked Fitz if he had anything, but he needed his tickets for his clients.

The CBC had the game on *Hockey Night in Canada*, and I caught it there. When I'd heard that the games would be in colour this year, I bought a new TV at

Simpsons. I was having some trouble with the rabbit ears, but mostly it worked pretty well.

It was a rough, fast game: Cheevers was in net for Boston and Sawchuk for Toronto.

Boston opened the scoring early, with a short-handed goal from Marotte and Orr. It took most of the period before Jim Ellis got it back for Toronto, with lots of stick play in between. The Big M got his seventh for Toronto early in the second, putting his team up 2-1.

And then in the third, the taps were turned open: Boston tied things up almost off the opening faceoff, with a messy shot that somehow hit Orr's skate and bounced into the net. They say that good goalies have fat goalposts. Apparently high-scoring defencemen have magnetic skate blades. But a few minutes later Toronto got two more: one from Stemkowski, and then from Jeffrey and Kelly. There was some more stick play before the end of the period, and Toronto went home the winners.

There's a lot to be said for colour TV.

Chapter 19

Unfortunately, Saturday night represented the high point of the week for the Leafs and me. The Boys in Blue took the train down to New York the next day, only to kill their streak with a bad loss. The *Globe* said it was the team's worst showing of the season, which is saying something. Things may not be as rosy as they looked this past ten days.

The weather was also taking a turn for the worse. Last week, it had been glorious. Temperatures in the low to mid-fifties and clear most days; records set in Toronto and Ottawa. Even a little fog on Friday and Saturday didn't bring things down.

Not anymore. Today was going to be in the mid-thirties with snow in the evening. Mid-week we'll be in the twenties. Winter was definitely coming.

I felt things turning for me as well. I'd found Tini, though I hadn't had a chance to really talk with her yet, but I still hadn't learned anything about the phone calls that were worrying Fitz. And, after speaking with Marty and thinking about it over the last couple of weeks, I was gradually deciding that there was nothing in the executions case for me either. It was a long time ago, as Hellyer said, and I couldn't see what bringing out the nastiness would do for anybody at this point. Beck and Dorfer were dead. Their families had known that since the war. The only difference now was that we knew it had been an ugly death. But death is always ugly in war. Young soldiers don't die in their sleep. There might even be something

to be said for the cleanness of an executioner's bullet on a nice spring morning in Holland over bleeding to death after having your guts ripped out by an 88 in the mud and rain of an Italian winter.

Either way, Fitz had been right. Nothing to do with us. A sad business for the Seaforths.

This was the way I was feeling when I came into the office. It was a little after nine. The boss's privilege. Nymphaea was already in, of course, as were the girls in the back room. As I opened the door I could hear their voices and typewriters. Nymphaea had a transistor radio playing low: "Walk Away Renée," a hit from a couple of weeks ago. It was also playing on a radio in the back room.

I'm not a big fan of folk, or rock, or folk-rock, or whatever they are calling it now. But you have to pick your battles. Kids today won't work if they can't have a radio, and they don't want a radio so they can listen to Tommy Dorsey. *Chacun à son goût*, as Archie no doubt would say. In the office, we seem to have reached an understanding: I won't complain if they don't turn the radio up, and they won't go on strike if I don't insist they turn it off. And it's not all bad, anyway. Old Blue Eyes himself has a record on CHUM at the moment, though it's no "Fly Me to the Moon."

This time, as I walked into the waiting room, Nymphaea turned the radio up. This was a clear breach of contract and a strange act of defiance from a girl who's otherwise so careful. I took a step to the coat rack, thinking rapidly about what it could mean and what I might say. Was she overdue for a raise? Had I done something to make her angry? But even as the thoughts fell over each other in my mind, she jumped up and rushed around her desk toward me. She took the hat out

of my hand and, reaching around me, put it on the rack. Then she helped me out of my jacket, holding the shoulders as I shrugged out of it. She's a conscientious girl, Miss Athanasopoulos, but this was more than normal.

Nymphea Athanasopoulos was the first person I hired when I set out on my own. She'd worked for a few weeks in Fitz's office as a Kelly Girl my first summer with him, and we hit it off really well. So when I needed a secretary a couple of months later, I got a hold of her and brought her on board.

At this point she is much more than a secretary. She manages the office, supervises the other girls, handles calls and messages for the streetmen, keeps my calendar, and runs interference for me when I need to get out of seeing somebody. A regular girl Friday. I often say that I work in her office rather than the other way round.

As you can tell from her last name, she's a Greek. Her parents came here as DPs after the war. Nymphea was just a toddler. Her father, Nico, runs a diner up on Parliament Street, across from where the Jamestown apartments are going up, and she lives with her mother, father, older sister, and two younger brothers in an apartment on the upper floors of the same building, an old Victorian rooming house they rent for the business.

For a Greek, Cabbagetown is quite literally the wrong side of the tracks: the big Greek community is on the other side of the Don Valley, across the Bloor Viaduct along the Danforth. But Nico's made a smart go of it: with the CBC studios just a couple of blocks down from him on Parliament and the whole upper Cabbagetown on his doorstep, it's a good neighbourhood for a diner. And I can't see that things

are going to get any worse: with the new subway and stations at Sherbourne and Castle Frank, everybody at the CBC has to walk past his place to catch their train home. And then those new apartments. The neighbourhood has nowhere to go but up.

The first thing anybody notices about Nymphaea when they are introduced, of course, is her name. She's very attractive and does always seem to have a new boyfriend, but that doesn't explain why her father named her like a Bond girl. It turns out that Nico is an amateur horticulturalist and he named both his daughters after types of lilies. Her older sister is called Navona, which doesn't sound so strange in English. But by the time he got to his second daughter, he was feeling more adventurous, and Nymphaea it was. I'm guessing it sounds less lascivious in Greek.

As Nymphaea hung up my coat, I turned to thank her — and to find out what was up. "There's a couple of Mounties in your office," she said in a low voice, almost whispering. This explained the radio volume. "Plainclothes but not hiding it. They came in about five minutes ago looking for you. I didn't want to leave them out here. There's nothing on your desk."

It's rare when my kind of investigator gets a visit from the RCMP. Our clients are not always angels — which of course is why I do as well as I do — but they're also not the kind of people who police usually track down in person. When the men who hire me are wanted by the police, a word to their lawyers is usually enough to arrange a visit or, if things are black enough, a surrender; and since the lawyers' is where they'd end up anyway, if they ever tried to push things, they never try to

come through me. I'm rarely involved on the financial side of things — and that's where most crime is in my set — and it would be the end of my business if I were to start telling the cops what little I know. Only a rookie Horseman would think to come to an agency like mine to get information on a client — and his partner would soon convince him it was a bad idea.

"Did they say what they wanted?" I asked.

"They said it was a 'courtesy call,'" she answered, still speaking low. "A little chat about some things you've been working on. 'Might save everybody some time,' they said."

"Names?"

"They wouldn't say," Nymphaea said. "'Isn't important,' they said. But also that you'd be happy for the visit."

That left nothing to do but head inside.

"All right," I said. "We should see what they want. Why don't you come with me to take notes? Bring your steno pad and ask one of the girls to watch your desk."

Nymphaea crossed the waiting room and opened the door to the back room. It was marked "Staff Only" and opened onto our main workspace. This was the largest room in our suite, where the investigators worked. We had a couple of desks for the streetmen, when they were in, and another six for the girls who did our telephone and records work. Whenever I needed Nymphaea, we asked one of the girls to cover the reception desk and main telephone.

This time, it was Anne Josephs who came out, our Negro girl. She's a great worker and one of my favourites among the researchers.

Anne's parents had moved here from Trinidad when she was quite young. Her father works for the TTC and her mother is a nurse. She has a lovely Caribbean lilt to her accent. And she's not hard to look at. She was wearing a beautiful floral dress that showed off her colour. As Anne followed Nymphaea through the workroom door, I heard the song change on the radios. A new "Do Wop" about how wonderful vibrations are. Anne closed the door behind her and the noise died down a little. She stepped behind the desk and stood in front of Nymphaea's chair. Nymphaea picked up her steno pad.

"Thanks so much, Miss Josephs," Nymphaea said. "Please watch the phone and the door. Mr. Sanderson is expecting a client at ten, but I hope we'll be done before then. Unless it's an emergency, please take a message. We should not be disturbed."

Anne smiled and sat down. Nymphaea turned to me, pad in hand and nodded. Ready. As a courtesy, I tapped on the window of my office door before pushing it open, to let them know we were coming. Without waiting for an answer, I stepped in, Nymphaea following. It's still my office.

The room is about fifteen by fifteen and on an outside wall with a window. It's set up the way you'd imagine for an office where you meet with clients. The desk is about four foot from but parallel to the outside wall, centred on the window. In front of it are two wooden high-backed chairs facing the window. This is where the clients usually sit. Directly behind them are two more chairs for overflow, and, on the wall farthest from the door, another two — for the few times when people decide to bring an army. Across from those chairs, on the door side, I have a filing-

cabinet-safe combination and a small credenza. The top of the credenza has a couple of framed pictures — the staff at an office party last year, my mother and father in front of our old shop, and a group of us from the war standing around a destroyed King Tiger. Inside the credenza is a bottle of Five Star, a lockbox with my office gun, a couple of boxes of bullets, and some other tools of the trade.

The first thing I noticed when I stepped into the room was that the Mounties were sitting in the wrong place. Instead of the client chairs in front of my desk, or maybe in the backup chairs behind them, which is where most normal people would sit, these guys were sitting in the chairs along the far wall, at right angles to my desk and facing the door instead of the window. In all the years I've been in this business, I've never seen anybody take those chairs first.

The Mounties got to their feet as we crossed the room. As Nymphaea had said, they were dressed in civilian clothes but not very convincingly. Everything about them said "RCMP." They were both about six feet tall and beefy, with big feet. They had identical haircuts — flat tops, short back and sides — identical dark-brown suits, identical black fedoras, and identical heavy police boots pretending to be dress shoes. Men's fashion by the quartermaster. Both men had their hair cut so short that it was difficult to tell the colour. The man on the left, who was slightly heavier and a fair bit older, had what looked like a slight salt-and-pepper haze to his head. The one on the right, who was a little thinner and a lot younger, was probably some kind of blond. He looked almost bald but with a kind of whitish fuzz on top if the light caught him just right.

Other than age and weight, the only difference between them was around their

necks. The older man, it seems, was a bit of a dandy — in a straitlaced way. He had on what looked like a \$20 tie — wide, silk, and red with some kind of geometric shape painted on it — with a matching pocket square. The kind of thing that had been very fashionable ten years ago. So quite up-to-date for a cop.

The younger man was more catalogue. He had a cheaper, regulation-looking striped-yellow tie, with a white pocket square, or, more likely, I thought, a folded-up handkerchief. *The Untouchables* come to life.

“Douglas Sanderson,” I said, introducing myself. “And this is Miss Athanasopoulos, my secretary.”

“Jim,” said the older Mountie, shaking my hand. “Bill,” said the younger. No last names needed, apparently. Or badges, I noticed. We were to take them on trust. They nodded to Nymphaea.

Normally, I'd have gone behind my desk, and Nymphaea would have pulled one of the extra chairs from the far wall, so that she sat by my left shoulder, steno pad on my desk, ready to take notes. But the Mounties were sitting in those chairs and showing no sign of moving. So instead of going behind my desk, I decided we should sit in front, facing them. Show them we could be just as awkward as they could.

I grabbed the visitor chair closest to them and turned it parallel to the front of my desk. “Why don't you sit here, Miss Athanasopoulos,” I said, patting the back of the chair. She'd have to reach across herself to write, but I thought it might be useful to mix things up a little and sit closer to them than was comfortable otherwise.

Nymphaea crossed in front of me and sat down. I reached behind her and

grabbed the other chair in front of my desk, the one closest to the office door. I pulled it out and gave it a quarter turn, putting it beside Nymphhea, facing the Mounties. Then I sat down. We were now sitting knee to knee, staring at each other. Nobody said anything.

I waited thirty seconds before breaking the silence. "Miss Athanasopoulos has excellent shorthand," I said. "She usually takes notes for me. There's nothing you can say in front of me that you can't say in front of her."

The younger man looked at his boss nervously. The older Mountie spoke up.

"Actually, this is more of a courtesy call than an interview," he said. "I don't think you'll need notes, and we'd feel easier if we kept things informal."

I turned to Nymphhea. "In that case, you can go back to reception, Miss Athanasopoulos," I said. "Please save your break until I've finished up here. I'll call you if I need you." Neither she nor I were fooled by the boss act. But maybe the cops were. A man has to have some dignity.

Nymphhea heading to the other room meant that we all had to stand up again. Me so that Nymphhea could get out; the Mounties to avoid looking rude. I moved my chair to the side, giving Nymphhea space to walk between us. She nodded to the Mounties and then turned on her heel. The older cop thanked her for her time. Both of them looked at her backside as she walked away. She opened the door to her office again and I heard the sound of the radio again, still too loud. The tune was nothing I recognized — something vaudevillian-sounding, with tin whistles and carnival engines.

"Could you turn the radio down, Miss Athanasopoulos?" I asked as she closed

the door. Behind her I could see Anne standing, waiting for further instruction. The door closed. The music stopped. I pushed my chair back beside the one Nymphaea had just vacated and sat down before turning my attention back to the Mounties. Things were now even stranger: I was sitting knee to knee with the younger of the two Horsemen, like a confessor, with an empty chair between me and my desk. For the Holy Spirit, perhaps.

"Kids today and their radios," the younger man said, trying hard not to be one. "I guess there's not much you can do." He looked from one to the other of us for approval.

"I ask her to keep it down, and she mostly does," I said. "We seem to have an arrangement."

"It's all noise to me," the younger man continued, still trying too hard. "I like a tune you can dance to."

We fell silent. I didn't feel like humouring him anymore and the older cop didn't look like he cared about his partner's taste in music.

I decided to wait a moment before offering an opening. They were visiting me. If they wanted something, they should say. They sat silently.

After a minute, I'd had enough. They won this round.

"Miss Athanasopoulos said that you wanted to chat with me about some areas of mutual interest," I began. "I don't need to tell you, I'm sure, that I can't talk about anything to do with my clients."

"We're not interested in your clients," the older replied. "At least I don't think we are. This is more a matter of public interest."

It took a little while to get it out of them. But after some talking around, it became clear that they were also interested in the story of the executions.

"As you know," the older one said, "there's an inquiry going on."

"We were wondering what you remembered," added the younger one.

"What I remembered?" I asked. "I don't understand. How could I remember anything?"

"Oh, I'm sure it's nothing," the older one replied. "Just we know that you were talking to Martha Fordham and Bill Thackery at the *Tely*, and when we looked you up, we saw that you were in Civil Affairs at the time in Amsterdam."

"How do you know I was talking to Bill and Marty?" I asked back, genuinely surprised. I decided not to tell them that Bill had been "indisposed" and that it was only Marty and me who'd spoken. Don't want to do their work for them.

"And what does any of this have to do with you, anyway? I thought the Army was investigating it. In fact, I thought they had investigated it and there was nothing to see."

"Well, Doug," the older one began.

"Sandy," I interrupted. "People call me 'Sandy.'"

"Well, 'Sandy'," he went on, getting used to the name, "you never really know, do you? Take the Munsinger woman, for instance — five years ago, she was just a pretty face. A bit on the side. And now we've got a Royal Commission and communists under every bed. All from a chance comment in the House."

Gerda Munsinger was a German prostitute who'd been accused of sleeping with some of Diefenbaker's cabinet a few years ago in order to get intel for the

Russians. A spy.

"I thought the problem was that she was *in* every bed, not under them," I joked.

"Yes, that's right," the younger Mountie said. He wasn't smiling. "But only a couple of beds. The minister's and the Russian ambassador's." A literal man, apparently.

"The point is, nobody wants something like that to happen again," the older one said. I noticed he wasn't answering my question about how he knew I'd been talking to the *Tely*. I made a mental note to be careful around Marty in the future, though it didn't sound like her. Could they be tapping phones? I tried to remember if we said that Marty would be alone when she met me at the Walker.

"Munsinger's not the only reason the Americans and Brits are angry at us and we can't afford another incident," the older Mountie continued, breaking into my post-mortem.

"Okay, but I'm still not seeing the connection," I said. "Nor what this has to do with me. What has a screw-up at the end of the war in Amsterdam got to do with the Russians?"

"Beck was a communist, wasn't he?" the younger Mountie asked.

"Well, first of all, all I know about this case is what I read in the papers," I answered.

"And secondly, I don't know that he actually was a communist. When he deserted, the communists took him in.

"But thirdly, as your partner may remember, we were fighting *with* the communists in those days, not *against* them. About half the members of the

underground I interviewed at the end of the war were communists or socialists of one kind or another.”

“That’s what we mean,” said the older Mountie. “A lot of these guys *were* communists. And it looks like this Beck fellow might have been as well. *You* might have been fighting *with* the communists. But a lot of the rest of us were also fighting against them. We saw what was coming next. Gouzenko. *The Iron Curtain*. We knew who our friends were.”

“Churchill called it ‘the iron curtain’ a year after the war ended,” I said. “We were fighting *with* them in the war, whatever you might think.

“But either way, it doesn’t matter much now: Beck and Dorfer were killed years ago and Munsinger wasn’t, which is why she could sleep with Dief’s cabinet and spy on them for the Russians.”

They both stared at me in silence.

“The point I’m trying to make,” I continued, “is that I don’t see how the Beck story has anything to do with Munsinger, the communists, or anything else you two might be interested in — then or now. The Germans shot him and Dorfer because they claimed they were spying *for* us, not against us. And I don’t think even they really believed it. It looks to me like Beck and Dorfer were just two dumb bastards who got caught in the last great SNAFU of the Second World War.”

“Just what we were hoping to hear,” the young one answered. “So I take it that nothing you’ve seen suggests that anything untoward was going on, then or now.”

“Untoward?” I replied, raising my voice. “Untoward? The whole thing was ‘untoward,’ for Christ’s sake!” Without really knowing why, I was starting to lose my

temper with them.

"These two poor buggers were shot by the Germans," I continued. "With our help. After the war had ended. *Because they were cooperating with us.*" I poked my knee with my index finger with each syllable as I said this last sentence. I was starting to shout.

"So I don't see how you can say that 'nothing untoward' happened. It was the very last thing the German army did before it was disbanded in Holland. Which probably makes it the last legal act of the Wehrmacht in the entire fucking war! And it happened on our watch. We let them kill these guys because they came over to us!"

My anger shocked them as well as me and there was a moment's pause. Then the older one started to speak softly.

"I think it probably upsets all of us who were there, Sandy," he said. He was comfortable with the name now. "I was in the Princess Pats during the war and I hated those goddamn Nazis. It kills me to see them still bringing good men down."

The Princess Pats – the Princess Patricias – were a Calgary regiment. Light Infantry.

"And it's good to hear that there was nothing else going on," the young one added.

"Well, we appreciate your time," the older one said, crowding out any chance for his partner to dig himself deeper into a hole — or for me to put him in his place. "As I said, only a routine thing on our end."

I was still upset, so I just grunted.

“Anyway,” he continued. “No matter what you thought of them then, it’s not the end of the war anymore, and the communists are no longer our friends — if they ever were!”

The two of them stood up as if a signal had passed between them. They stuck out their hands again.

“Let us know if you discover anything, Sandy,” the older cop said as we shook. We were pals now, as far as he was concerned. Old Soldier to Old Soldier. “A man with your experience — and especially with the contacts you had in those days... Well, if anybody’s going to see any problems we should know about, it’s going to be you. The old firm would love to hear from you if you find out anything.”

I’d had enough by then and shook their hands perfunctorily. They walked past me and opened the door. The radio was off. Nymphaea was sitting behind her desk, typing a letter. She looked up as the officers came through.

“Good morning, gentlemen,” she said. “Don’t hesitate to call if you need anything else.”

I closed the door behind them.

“Well, that was interesting,” Nymphaea said as soon as they left. My office was wired for sound and Nymphaea had been listening in. “Any idea what it could mean?”

“I’ve no idea,” I replied. “It’s clear they think there’s some kind of national security angle to this, but I can’t see what it could be. As you heard, back in those days the communists were our allies; the Cold War hadn’t started yet.”

“My father never believed that the communists were anybody’s allies,” Nymphaea

said. "That's why we left. He was worried they'd take over. It's his great fear to this day: communist Greece."

"Well, sure," I said. "That was big news right after the war, Nymphaea."

"And in the civil war," she added.

"I guess you don't need history lessons from me."

"I wish I did, Sandy," she answered. She never called me Sandy. "Let's just say the issue of whether communists could be trusted came up occasionally at our dinner table when I was a kid."

"It still doesn't explain why the Mounties are interested in this case," I added. "Throwing Munsinger around implies that they think it has something to do with now. But I just can't see any connection, except to a couple of poor guys from the Seaforths out west who are going to get hung out to dry if they aren't careful!"

It was a real question. Something about this case must be relevant now, or the Mounties wouldn't be interested in it. But I couldn't see it.

Chapter 20

The next couple of weeks passed in a blur.

The Leafs got back in the groove with wins against Montreal, Detroit, and Boston, which put them in first place for a couple of days. They then bounced around a little, winning at home and mostly losing on the road. By the middle of December, they were in third place, but still not too far behind New York and Chicago. And a good seven or eight points ahead of the Habs, who were in fourth.

I got called away to Montreal myself in the first week of December. One of the insurance companies Fitz worked with was worried they had an embezzler in their head office, and they asked me if I'd be willing to go back out and work with my former agency while they did the last checks before pulling the guy. It gave me a chance to catch up with Mike Garfin, my old boss. We even managed to get in a Leafs game at the Forum — a 6-3 loss.

The game was messy. The Leafs started the scoring early in the first, with a power-play goal from Jim Peppin in the first two minutes — a hard shot from the right wing while the Habs' Ferguson was off for elbowing. About ten minutes later, Montreal took over with three goals, one after the other: the Rocket deflected a shot from Provost; Larose slipped one under Sawchuk during a goal-mouth scuffle; and Cournoyer got the third on the next power play — a long drifting shot from centre ice that seemed to catch Sawchuk sleeping.

After that, the two teams traded goals, hits, and goalies for the rest of the game,

always getting back to that two-goal difference. Horton for Toronto at the end of the first period. Larose again for Montreal at the beginning of the second. Then Armstrong for the Leafs and Rousseau for the Canadiens.

The third period began with Worsley getting pulled from goal for Montreal after injuring his knee on a shot from Conacher. Meanwhile, Sawchuk was beginning to really struggle in our end. Just before the halfway mark, Harris caught Shack looking over his shoulder and knocked him out cold with an elbow to the head. He was down for about ten minutes, and Punch Imlach, the Leafs's coach, decided to make the best of the break by switching out Sawchuk for Bower in net. The Leafs took a couple more stupid penalties and then, in the last five minutes, Montreal's Gentleman Jean Beliveau put them out of their misery with a backhander over Bower's shoulder. I was glad when it was finished.

Michel "Mike" Garfin, the guy I went to the game with, was the same one who'd got me started as a dick. He's a little younger than me, maybe in his early to mid-forties, and he'd joined the Provosts as a volunteer in the last six months of the war. But unlike me, he stayed on with the Mounties after we were demobbed and ended up posted out to Manitoba somewhere, where they could use his French.

Mike was always a bit of a ladies' man, and while he was out in Manitoba, he ended up sleeping with a suspect's wife who was also passing on what the RCMP were up to to her husband. It was a big scandal, and Mike got drummed out of the corps. He drifted back east, stopping first for a while in Toronto, then setting up an investigations agency in Montreal.

Mike's specialty was missing persons — girlfriends, boyfriends, sons- and

daughters-in-law, grandmamas who liked the tippie a little too much. Montreal in the 1950s was like a Vegas or Havana of the North, and there was quite a trade in tracking down people who'd come to La Belle Ville in order to let loose — or get lost. About half the business seemed to involve Americans coming up to rescue family members on the lam — wayward sons who'd got in with the wrong crowd, sisters-in-law cheating on a beloved brother, or rumours of a long-lost friend who'd ended up in the fleshpots off St. Laurent. The other half involved the wealthier locals worried about sons and daughters getting caught up with those same wayward Americans and especially those same fleshpots.

Mike is the exception to my rule about private eyes being more records-office than speakeasy: his life was like something out of a novel. Nothing he worked on was ever what it seemed. A typical case might begin with a beautiful young thing coming to see him about tracking down an old girlfriend — actually, they always seemed to begin with a beautiful young thing coming to see him. But before you knew it, the girl would turn out to be a madam, and what she was really trying to do was put out a hit on the competition. Or she'd be the wife of the head of the Quebec mob. Or the girlfriend of some Latin American dictator on the run. But actually sleeping with his son.

You just never knew where things were going to end up — except that there'd be bars and brothels, broads, and bouncers with brass knuckles. One time, there was a dwarf who liked to dress up like Pierrot and hit people with a weighted piece of garden hose.

I kid you not.

It was like somebody decided to take a Mike Hammer novel and set it in Montreal. With Garfin, I spent more time drinking on the clock than off it.

Of course in real life even Mike Hammer has to pay the bills, and what I said earlier about the kind of people who get caught up in sex-trafficking rings also being the kind who don't pay their detective bills was as true in Montreal in the mid-1950s as it is now in Toronto in the mid-1960s. So we also did insurance work and security, which was how I first caught back up with Fitz before he set me up in my own business, and why I was back in Montreal with Garfin now.

After the game, we decided to head along St. Catherine with the rest of the French crowd. We were originally planning to go all the way across to the old office near St. Laurent, but we got tired of walking and ended up instead in a little bar off Stanley. We had a couple of quarts of Molson in front of us, like old times, and Mike, who was half Irish and half Habitant, was talking to me in English between making wise cracks in French with the bartender and some of the older customers.

"I've seen corpses with more ambition than the Leafs today, Sandy," Mike said as he returned from the bar with our second set of quarts. "I think they were trying to lose."

"Or maybe not get killed," I answered. "Harris just about took Shack's head off. He's going to be out for weeks."

"Well, after what you guys did to Orr," Mike said. On Sunday, the Leafs had been in Boston for a 3-0 win, and the Bruins' new defenceman had fallen hard on his left knee. The papers were saying a week in hospital at the least, with maybe some surgery to repair the ligaments.

“He’s a young man,” I said. “He’ll get over it. It’s not like a bad knee’s going to end his career.”

We stared at each other for a second.

“This is when the sorting starts, Mike,” I said. “It’s that time. For the first month or so, it’s not really clear who’s really winning and who’s really losing. What’s chance and what’s skill. You win a couple. You lose a couple. You tie a couple. There’s no pattern. It’s only after you get a couple of months in that you start to see what it all means — who’s on a winning streak, who’s on a losing streak, who’s playing hurt, and who’s on the mend. What the pattern is. And I gotta say, despite tonight, I’m beginning to like what I’m seeing here.”

“Patterns are for quilts, Sandy,” Mike answered. “There is no pattern — to hockey or to life. Just actions and reactions and then when the smoke clears, somebody’s holding the cup. Or the bag. Or the gun.

“You think you see patterns, but they aren’t really there. It’s all random”

The barman brought us over a new round and we turned to catching up. Mike was still living in a duplex on a street off Western Ave — or Boulevard de Maisonneuve, as they decided to rename it in the past couple of weeks. His ancient Scottish landlady, Mrs. Lindsay, had died since I was last up, but she’d willed the place to Mike and Tessie, the hooker — now apparently ex-hooker — who’d been his on-and-off-again girlfriend since before I started working with him in Montreal. His old friend on the Sureté, Captain Masson, had never been promoted any further, but retired a year or two ago and still had Mike up at his cabin in the Laurentides as often as he could. The city was being cleaned up for Expo and the

Centennial, and there were a lot fewer of the gambling dens and illegal clubs that had provided us with so much of our business — and excitement — only a decade ago.

“You’d hardly recognize the place, Sandy,” he said after taking a long swallow and banging the empty glass — his fourth — on the table. “Painted up like a whore on a Saturday night but chaster than a nun after confession. It’s just not the same at all. They ran off all the bums and shut down the worst of the dives, and the Yanks don’t come up here to slum anymore. Nowadays, it’s all students, and hippies, and draft dodgers. And revolutionaries hoping to bring down *les anglos*. Barely a hoodlum or a hooker among them.”

I looked at him across the table. Always a bit of dandy — if a dandy can be built like an oak tree — Mike was dressed in a winter-weight wool suit, with a light-pink shirt, a brown silk tie, and a very fancy beaver-skin fedora. He was beginning to show his age — a little thicker around the middle and neck, maybe, and his face had the scars from years of hard living and fighting. But he was still in pretty good shape for a guy starting his turn into the back stretch. His suit was too well cut to show off his biceps or thighs — Mike always said he’d rather be pistol-whipped than wear a tight suit — but I’d caught a glimpse when he twisted around at one point to flag down the barman down for our fifth round. He still had a boxer’s arms.

“That’s the other thing I don’t get, Sandy,” he said, starting on his next quart. “These kids.

“When you and I were starting out, we were back from the war. We’d grown up in the Depression. We knew what it was like to be poor ourselves, and then, when

we saw those poor fucks in Europe, we knew what it was like to be even poorer, to have everything taken away from you — and I'm not even talking about the DPs or the Jews.

“So then we got back here and we swore that would never happen to us. We worked hard. We bought nice clothes. Nice cars. We went out to nice places. Became adults. The girls were careful, but it was nothing a couple of drinks couldn't fix. Sure, there were hoodlums, and the mob, and hookers, and all the seedy business. But there was a bit of glamour too. Grown-up stuff. I was in my thirties when you were out here and I was really just beginning to feel at the top of my game.

“But now? Here I am in my forties and it's like the opposite of everything we thought is suddenly true. Kids are kids and they don't want to grow up anymore — but they treat guys like you and me like we're over the hill. They dress like bums and they drive these Kraut cars and they go on about a war in Vietnam that's got nothing to do with them. But you dress up and they think you're a bum. A \$300 suit means less to them than some old farm-jacket.

“And then there's the chicks. Nowadays, they don't care about their reputation. They put out like your sluttier kind of bonobo to every Tom, Dick, or Henri — but only so long as he's got long, greasy hair. You take some care of yourself and wear nice clothes and try to take them someplace fancy and they want nothing to do with you. It's like dirt is clean and clean is dirt, and everybody dresses like gypsies. I just don't get what happened. But whatever it was, it happened so fast.”

Mike was in his cups by this point and I looked at him in silence. What

generation hasn't said "kids today," I thought. It's a stage of life, like your voice breaking or having to shave for the first time. Except it means you're getting old.

But of course I'm getting old too, I guess, and I know what he means. Maybe things did turn pretty quickly. I remember a guy I knew, Joey Mack, who got killed back in Italy — caught when a Panzerfaust went off in a room he was in and we left him behind to bleed to death without realizing it.

He used to complain that we were stuck in Italy because the guys who'd caused the Depression and then got us into the war were just never letting go. "How many strikes do you get, Sandy, before it's somebody else's turn at bat," he asked me one day. "First these guys make sure we're so poor we'll do anything they say, just so's we can get a crust of bread. Then they tell us that what we gotta do to get that crust of bread is go to Europe to fight the Germans like our fathers did. And you don't see any of us wearing the red tabs like a general."

I agreed with him, but I used to think that that was because we were in our twenties and thirties, and that after the war we'd have our turn. And I guess we did for a little. A brief period when we were "at the top of our game," as Mike just said. But then the post-war generation started growing up and just as our guys started into power, the people above us turned their attention to the kids — to the new music and the new politics and the new ideas about sex and peace and love. The Centennial, Expo, the new subway at home, and, here in Montreal, the Metro. These weren't about us. These were about the future. And we weren't the future, I guess. Or if we were, we weren't the only future any more.

"It's the next generation, Mike," I answered at last. "This is what we were fighting

for.”

I figured we’d had enough by this point and it was time to head home. No matter what I thought of what Mike was saying, he was too far gone for a real conversation and I’ve never been a fan of sloppy drunks.

We decided to walk a block east and catch the new subway from Peel back to Atwater. Garfin’s place was a sober half-hour’s walk from there and I figured if he wasn’t up to it we could always catch a cab.

The Montreal Metro was only a couple of months younger than the TTC’s new Bloor-Danforth line, but it was from a different age. In Toronto, the subway cars looked like subway cars: big square metal things that rattled and squeaked as they came down the tracks at you. In Montreal, the Metro was like something out of the *Thunderbirds*: all plastic-looking with rounded corners, swooshing doors, and gigantic windows. The trains ran on rubber wheels and made almost no noise. A “whoosh” and a blast of warm air was the first sign our train was pulling into the station at Peel. I walked through the sliding doors and felt like an astronaut.

When we got to Atwater, I told Garfin that I’d walk him to the top of the stairs and make sure he was in a cab before I headed back to my hotel.

“You should come home with me, Sandy,” Mike said. “Tessie won’t mind, and maybe Marguerite will be there.” Marguerite was the girl Tessie used to live with when she was in the trade, and Mike was always sending guys to her back in the day — sometimes in pairs and sometimes with the idea that Tessie and even he might end up joining in.

I decided that this was the last thing I needed tonight, and so I slipped away as

soon as Mike was safely in his cab. I headed back down to the platform. I didn't have any pennies, so dropped two dimes in the turnstile and donated two cents to the city. I caught the next train east. I was staying in the Laurentian, where Mike and I used to put clients, and the occasional girl, when they needed to hide out. It's a nice place for St. Catherine East, and above all, nowadays, it's right beside the Metro stop. I nodded to the doorman as I entered the lobby, picked up my key at the front desk, and went straight upstairs. In twenty minutes I was fast asleep.

Chapter 21

I wrapped up my business in Montreal over the next couple of days and took the Rapido back to Union Friday evening. They did a call for the Bistro car, but I wasn't in a party mood. The idea of being stuck in a rolling, windowless bar with thirty or forty other middle-aged drunks had no appeal to me.

My night out with Garfin continued to bother me. He is almost a decade younger than I am, but I looked up to him in the 1950s. I didn't know what I was doing with myself after the war and he seemed to have it together in a way I didn't. He was also one of the most ethical people I knew — except, I suppose, when it came to chasing the skirts.

But even that was all in good fun — though for us, I suppose, maybe more than for the girls. When you paid Mike a retainer, you bought his services and there was nothing anybody could do to make him say anything about you — beat him up, threaten to kill him, turn him over to the police.

In all the years I'd known him, there was only one time when he'd betrayed a secret — and that wasn't about a customer. In fact, it was the case that involved that little Pierrot character with the weighted hose. Mike was being beat up by him in the back room of a bar out near Chinatown and it was clear he was going to be killed. To try to frighten them off, he said he was working undercover for the Horsemen. Unfortunately, an old buddy of his from his time out in Manitoba, Tom Littlejohn, really was working for the Mounties in Montreal undercover and

somehow the Syndicate ended up confusing the two of them and Tom got killed. But that made Mike, if anything, even more determined never to spill his guts or do the wrong thing.

At the time that had all seemed so noble. Like Mike said, we were young and proud and powerful — or at least that's how we thought of ourselves. We made our own decisions, set our own rules, and did what we wanted to do when we wanted to do it. And, if I'm being honest, we looked down on the people who came to us for help. Not necessarily the poor girls who were caught up in the flesh trade, or who were trying to shake an unwanted lover. But certainly the Americans and rich local clients. The ones who came to us to help cover up their family sins or to rescue their sons and daughters from scrapes that the rest of us would just have to live with. We took their money and protected their secrets, but we didn't respect them.

But now? Now I couldn't help feeling that it was Mike who I was losing respect for. That he'd lost something. He was forty-five years old and still hunting the frails with the desperation of a teenage virgin. He was probably right about the way we somehow went from being too young to too old without anything in between — I can still hear the girl at the Whitney Hall desk calling me an "old perv" and the suspicion you get when you talk to just about anybody under thirty these days. But there was also something pathetic about the way Mike was complaining. The young people might be getting all the attention, but when it came right down to it it was still the men like Fitz — and, I guess, in a more limited way, me — who had the money and power and were in charge of things. And Garfin too, if he would only stop pretending that he lived in a Chandler novel. We might tolerate the

hippies, and they might insult us, but in the end, “the man” was still “the man” and “the man” was, well let’s face it, us.

“All things bright and beautiful,” as the old hymn had it, “the Lord God made them all”:

“The rich man in his castle,
The poor man at his gate,
God made them, high or lowly,
And ordered their estate.”

You just had to realize where you stood in that order. And that it would never change.

Chapter 22

While I was thinking about Garfin, the Leafs continued their up-and-down streak — winning at home against Chicago and Boston and losing on the road to Detroit. But then, on December 17, they lost at home to New York — their first home loss all season — and started what turned into a three-game slide: they lost 3-1 the next night in Chicago, and then 6-2 in Montreal three nights after that.

Things took a turn for the worse in my own affairs as well. Fitz had found out about the “co-eds” and had another fight with Tini, who was now refusing to talk to him, Greta, or anybody associated with her parents — which of course meant me. She’d put out word at the Co-op that we weren’t to be put through to her, and this turned out to be the one thing the hippies could get organized. “Not here, man,” from the politer ones, or, from the more direct, a straight up “She doesn’t want to talk to you guys.” Either way, we weren’t going to get her on the phone.

I went to El Patio again hoping to catch up with her there, but she’d put out the word there too and I was *persona non grata* as far as the bouncers were concerned. I debated trying to catch her on the street as she went from the Co-op to her classes or to work at El Patio, but figured the last thing I needed was for some kid on campus to report “like, this old perv” following the chicks around. I couldn’t really see any way forward there.

Finally, up in Ottawa, the politicians decided that it was also time we dropped this whole Beck and Dorfer business. Hellyer said that the Army’s investigation

“absolved” the Canadians of any wrongdoing in the affair — which was hard to see, but good, I guess, for the Seaforths — and then both the Chief and Tommy Douglas agreed that we should just let the bygones go bye.

The fact that things were beginning to close down for Christmas took some of the edge off for me. But of course made it all the worse for Greta. And I guess for Fitz, though he didn’t say much. It’s tough if your kids aren’t talking to you over Christmas.

And then on Christmas Eve, the execution story started back up again with an article in the *Star* saying that the German general in charge of the camp at the time denied that he was the one who ordered the executions: the decision had been completely in the hands of this General Witt, he said, pointing once again at the officer who the Canadians claim didn’t exist. Clearly somebody knew more than they were saying, but I doubted we’d hear anything else for a couple of weeks at the earliest.

At least the weather began to improve. December 22 had been very cold, into the low teens but, after another drop on Christmas Day, the temperature started rising again right through the first week in January. There were a couple more dips and lifts and then we ended up with some glorious days mid-January, with bright sun and the temperature just above freezing. Which of course also meant that there was a lot of slush and your shoes would get ruined.

But if you didn’t think about that, it was wonderful.

Chapter 23

In fact, from Christmas through the middle of January, the Leafs played like they were controlled by the weather office. Losses against Chicago and Detroit and a draw against New York to remind us of the winter chill, but mostly a bunch of wins pointing to sunnier days ahead. They rose in the standings with the temperature, and by January 14 they had the best win-loss record of the season: +6 in a three-way tie for first place with Chicago and New York. Montreal was still in fourth, but they were eleven points behind. And record temperatures for the new year. Perseverance was paying off.

There was a pattern, no matter what Mike said. You just had to recognise it.

On January 13, I was packing up for the week when Nympha buzzed me on the intercom.

“Just had a call from Phyllis,” she said. Phyllis was Fitz’s secretary. “Mr. McCrae would like to remind you about the cocktails at his place tomorrow. They have a visitor from out of town whom Mrs. McCrae would really like you to meet.”

I said that I did remember and soon after decided to call it a day. I headed down to the subway. I managed to mostly beat the rush. I stepped off the Number 5 bus at the corner of Edmund and Avenue Road and headed up the slight hill to my building. I got back to my apartment about five.

The St. Edmund — or the Rookery, as I prefer to call it on account of all the widows who live there — is my building. It’s at Number 7, on the south side of

Edmund Avenue, a couple of doors up from the main road. Edmund runs at right angles to Avenue Road, along the top of the slope that separates the uptown part of Toronto around St. Clair from the lower part downtown. At the far end, just before it hits Poplar Plains, it runs a little farther back from the hill and there's space for a private road and some magnificent houses with spectacular views. There's a cul-de-sac there with three mansions on it. Two are owned by old industrial families and the third by a couple of roommates who own an advertising company. Houses there are easily in the \$200,000 range or more.

At my end of the street, things are a little less fancy but not by much. This is still a very nice neighbourhood and the people still have money, even if they aren't quite as rich as at the west end. The view is not as spectacular either, but it isn't too bad. There's a small apartment building behind us and a bigger one slightly farther down the slope, both of which reduce the panorama; but from the third floor, where my apartment is, you can look clear out over the lake if you have a south-facing apartment. Which I don't. But the uptown view isn't too bad either. Edmund's a nice, green, city street. I like looking out over it.

The really remarkable thing about the St. Edmund, however, is the number of women who live in it. There's no law against male tenants in the building — I live here, after all — but by far the majority of the apartments are rented to women, mostly older and mostly widowed or never married. Even the young ones live alone or share with another girl.

My neighbour across the hall, Edie McNeill, is both typical and atypical. Typical in the sense that she's in her nineties, a widow, and lives with her maiden sister.

But atypical in almost every other respect. She's a smart, alert old biddy who's lived more than most of us could hope to at twice her age. Her father was Senator Kerr, the Liberal warhorse. Her husband was General Erin McNeill, who led recruitment in Ottawa during the first war.

Edie was also something of a politician in her own right, back in the day. She grew up in Coburg, a small town between here and Kingston that's on the new Toronto-Montreal freeway. Before she married McNeill she was a town councillor there and ultimately reeve — the first lady reeve in the history of the country, as she never tires of pointing out to me. She also ran for parliament, was president of the Daughters of the British Empire during World War I, and is the author of two famous letters-to-the-editor: the first, while she was president of the Daughters during the first war, was against conscription — something I can't imagine her husband, who was responsible for imposing that same conscription at the time, could have been happy about. The second was in the 1950s and took Prime Minister Mackenzie King to task for refusing to appoint women as senators, starting, I suspect, with herself. "I'm an honours university graduate, an alderman, bilingualist, and the first woman reeve ever elected in Canada," she told me one evening when she was deep in her cups, echoing her second famous letter. "I'd be a senator if I'd done half those things as a man."

And that's the other thing about Edie: she may be ninety, a general's widow, and a senator's daughter, but she's also a lot of fun. Before I bought my colour TV and I started watching the Leafs with her and her sister most Saturday evenings, she used to come over maybe once a month for a drink, telling me stories of the old

days: Toronto during and after the first war and Cobourg around the turn of the century. She still gets out to the family estate in her hometown. And she's always out and about in the building when she's here. She's also the only tenant in the St. Edmund whose parties are covered by Zena Cherry, the *Globe's* society columnist. All told, our bit of class.

I ran into her as I came up the stairs.

"You're back early, young man," she said. "I hope this doesn't mean you're skiving off and leaving that poor Miss Athanasópoulos to pick up your mess."

Edie had met and fallen in love with Nymphaea at our staff party the year before last. She always called her "Miss Athanasópoulos," with an exaggerated stress on the middle o. "I'm a classicist," she told me, "and it simply pains me the way Canadians butcher Greek names. There's a beauty even in the modern Greek that you just don't find in the Latin — and certainly not Italian or English! You should learn to say Miss Athanasópoulos's name properly!"

In addition to getting Nymphaea's name right, her other main concern is ensuring that I neither molested nor overworked her.

"I know how you men treat their secretaries," she scolded me. "And while I'm sure Miss Athanasópoulos would cut it off if you tried to lay a hand on her" — she always made an emphatic pulling and hacking motion with her hands when she said this, like she was pulling and cutting the throat of some poor turkey — "I'm equally sure she works herself to the bone covering for your mistakes. Things would go a lot less smoothly if it weren't for all the young women like Miss Athanasópoulos making sure the *t*'s are crossed and *i*'s dotted. It's a wonder girls

today have any time to find suitors, let alone get married.”

I agreed that Miss Athanasopoulos was a marvel who had saved me trouble on many occasions. But I also assured Edie that Nympha had her evenings off and was free to find a suitor, should she so choose. Which she very often did, as far as I could tell.

“I simply will not have you harming that girl’s prospects,” she interrupted, rolling with her favourite theme. “Or her reputation. Mabel and I will be having a small get-together next month in honour of Lieutenant Governor Colonel Papineau. I can assure you that I will be sending an invitation to Miss Athanasópoulos — and perhaps to you as well, if she tells me that you are treating her well.”

I told her that I would do my best to reform between now and then, in hopes of remaining in her good graces.

“Be sure that you do, Mr. Sanderson. Be sure that you do!”

With my weekly scolding out of the way, she asked about the game tomorrow night, and I told her that I’d have to cancel our weekly soiree.

“I’m sorry to hear that, Mr. Sanderson,” Edie said after I’d told her about my plans. “I think it is going to be a great game!”

“You can tell me all about it on Sunday, Mrs. McNeill,” I replied, opening my apartment door. “I promise not to read a paper or listen to the radio until you do.”

“It’s a date,” Edie said. “Make sure you don’t stay out too late!”

Chapter 24

It was about 6:30 on Saturday evening when I left for Fitz's place. I was still a little early, so decided to take the scenic route: down the hill on Avenue Road, left onto Davenport, Belmont, then the Rosedale Valley Road to Park.

By the time I got to Park, something had come over me and I felt an ease that I hadn't in months. The Lincoln was humming; the road felt like it was at my command. The trees, though they'd lost their leaves by this point, of course, didn't look as awful as they normally do at this time of year. So instead of turning right onto Park and then heading across to Fitz's place, I decided to take what must be the longest possible route — following South Drive all the way round, crossing Dunbar and Glen before hitting Elm just to the west of Fitz's house. I rolled down my window and let the cool air blow over me. There was snow coming, but this evening it was in the 40s. Just beautiful.

I'd been to Fitz's place many times in the past, of course, but even if I hadn't known exactly which house was his, I'd have no difficulty finding it tonight — the street in front was packed with cars. It wasn't going to be a little soiree, after all.

100 Elm Avenue, or "Orangefield," as Fitz prefers to call it, is where he and Greta live and Tini grew up. It's on the north side of Elm and backs onto Craighleith Gardens and the Rosedale Ravine.

Fitz bought it in the early 1950s, a couple of years after he and Greta got back to Canada and just as he started doing well at his father's company. But even then it

must have been a stretch. Prices in this part of Rosedale, even in the 1950s, would have been measured in the hundreds of thousands of dollars — at a time when you could buy a place in Scarborough for under ten. I'm guessing he saw it as a down payment on his future career as a philanthropist and leading citizen.

Apart from the name, which Fitz told me has something to do with his family's traditional estates back in Scotland, the house is a pretty standard, turn-of-the-century manse: large, square, dark, and solid, made out of Don Valley red brick with white wooden pillars, window frames, and trim.

The house is big, with eight bedrooms, maids' quarters, and a standalone garage at the back that I imagine was originally a stable. It's on the west edge of what is easily an acre lot, though most of the property is behind a large brick wall that runs from the edge of the driveway to the eastern property line.

There are a lot of architecturally interesting houses in Rosedale, but Orangefield isn't one of them. Size is its dominant feature. Apart from a wooden portico around the front door, and an arched window on what used to be an upstairs ballroom, it is mostly just a really big square pile of bricks. Two main stories, with a gabled roof. The front door opens out toward the street, and on the side is the door people actually use on a day-to-day basis, leading from the driveway up some stairs, and through the kitchen.

One strange feature, especially given the neighbourhood, is the absence of trees and bushes. There's a huge elm just to the west of the property; a large oak in the backyard; and at the end of the yard, Craigleith Gardens and the Rosedale Valley ravine. But the property as a whole has remarkably little vegetation. For a

house as old as Fitz's in a neighbourhood as established as this, where the neighbours all peek out from behind large hedges and old trees, Fitz's place has the landscaping of a suburban showhome: a couple of small bushes, a seedling or two, but mostly grass everywhere you look.

When I saw the line of cars, I decided to take the first spot I could fit into. I ended up in front of Number 81, across the street and a couple of doors up from the McCraes. Although we usually come through the side door, for a party like this, they'd be using the front entrance. So when I got to his driveway, I turned left and rang the bell under the portico.

Ida, the housekeeper, answered the door.

Hers is a sad story. She's originally from a small village near Salerno, in Italy, and lived in the town with her husband, three teenage children, her mother, and her mother-in-law before the war. During the invasion, her house suffered a direct hit from a Navy shell, killing everybody inside — except Ida, who somehow survived the blast almost completely unharmed. She was blown out the door into the street, smacking her head against the neighbour's front door and knocking herself out.

When she came to, she discovered she was childless, a widow, and an orphan — and in the middle of an invasion. So she did what people do in those situations and made the best of things. As soon as the beachhead moved beyond Salerno, she started servicing the needs of Allied soldiers: cleaning, sewing, washing clothes, and maybe a few other things she hasn't told me about. Life is rough for single women and widows when the front lines run over them.

After a while Ida discovered a lucrative business connecting soldiers who had things to sell with Italian black-marketeers who could move the goods. You never read so much about it, but the liberation of Europe by the United Nations also involved the “liberation” by the Europeans of a lot of United Nations matériel. Soldiers would go AWOL from our side to join local gangs, and the resistance, the Mafia, and many others started pouring into what we were told had become the main criminal activity in Europe. Eisenhower had to send home half the officers in Paris for selling supplies to the black market during the Battle of the Bulge, and Harold Pringle, the only Canadian soldier executed during the war, was the leader of a gang of deserters who ran goods in and out of Rome after the battle of the Hitler line.

Ida's a smart woman, and since she was by this point completely free of domestic concerns, however tragic the reasons, she was also much more able to move about than most Italian women in their late thirties. When things got too hot for her with the U.S. Fifth Army, she took a stakeroll and moved across the country to the British Eighth. Finally, she ended up in Campobello, the First Canadian Division's primary staging area for the first half of the Italian campaign. Campbello was where the POWs shipped out and reinforcements shipped in; it had our main in-theatre medical station, the Divisional HQ, theatres, rest camps, and bordellos.

Fitz, who as chief of the Highlanders' HQ Company had a lot of dealings with Campobello, met Ida there. By this point she ran a store whose main business was selling the kind of odds and ends that soldiers want as they head off on leave: local wine and liquor, cigars, postcards, lace and other small presents suitable for giving

to a local girlfriend — even nylons and other things “imported” from Canada and the U.S. If you knew her or had the right person introduce you, then there was a lot more you could get from her place: cars, battlefield souvenirs — a lot of the Lugers our boys brought home after the war were bought in places like Ida’s — and pretty much anything else.

When the war ended, Ida’s main source of easy money — the Canadian and American soldiers — dried up. She carried on for a few years in her shop, which gradually became more and more of an ordinary grocery store and café. But she also started looking for a way out. She’d kept in touch with Fitz and he helped her apply for resettlement. He offered her a job as housemaid in Orangefield to smooth out the paperwork and she’d been with them ever since. She started as a maid, but was by this time a housekeeper in the old-fashioned sense: a senior domestic who managed Orangefield the way you might manage a small store, office, or hotel: hiring the staff, taking care of the supplies, and ensuring that things ran smoothly and the “clients” were happy. Technically a servant, I suppose; but with her own apartment in the house and, since she was in charge of the McCraes’ two other servants, her own employees, really more an independent contractor than a maid. Fitz told me that she was also quite well-established again in the Italian community in Toronto: buying and selling things that fell off the backs of trucks or that you could get a wholesale-lot deal on.

Although she was already well into her thirties when she arrived here, Ida nevertheless has excellent English — much better than Greta’s, in fact, though I’d never tell Greta that. She has maybe the slightest bit of an accent, but on the

whole she sounds like she grew up here, maybe in the Italian part of town over by Spadina, Dupont, and St. Clair West. It probably helps that she's a fantastic mimic and impersonator: she can do anybody's accent and you know instantly who she's supposed to be. A scary thing in a housemaid, when you come to think of it. But it always makes me laugh. She's got a great Lamport, a good Trudeau, and an astounding Diefenbaker. Hearing the Chief come out of this tiny Italian woman's mouth is always a surprise, no matter how often I hear her do him.

Even though her English is better than mine, I always try to speak a little Italian with her when I visit Fitz. I can't do much more than say hello and goodbye, but she's patient and it's nice to keep the rust off — and it gives me a chance to flirt just a little with a woman who is aging extremely well.

"Buona sera, Signora Barone," I said when she answered my ring.

"Signore Sanderson! Come stai?" she answered.

"Bene. E voi?"

"Benissima."

We went on to talk about how lovely the evening was and whether she could take my hat and coat, which pretty much exhausts my repertoire. So we switched to English.

"They're in the library, Mr. Sanderson, upstairs. Mr. McCrae asked me to tell you he'd like to speak with you privately at some point if you get a chance."

We got to the top of the stairs and she pointed me unnecessarily toward the French doors that open into what used to be the front half of the upstairs ballroom — the room on the second floor behind the arched window on the front of the

house. When the house had been built, the ballroom ran the length of the second floor, from front to back. I'm sure it could easily have accommodated a hundred people, with perhaps half of them dancing. A wall had been put up to divide the space sometime before Fitz and Greta bought the house: the front half became what they called the library, but the rest of us might describe as a "reception room" or even an oversized den; the back half a dining room that they used for more formal dinners. The library consisted of several seating areas made out of couches and armchairs, and along the outside and inside walls stood some dark built-in bookcases.

There were about twenty people in the room, standing and sitting, as I went through the doors. Alice, one the McCraes' maids, was walking around with a tray, refreshing drinks, bringing hors d'oeuvres, and taking away empty glasses. Working the room with two other girls whom I'd never seen before. Hired for the evening, I guess.

Chapter 25

“Sendie!” Greta called as I entered, waving across the room to me. She was wearing a semi-formal black-and-white-checked dress with a swing skirt. Over it, she had a corset-style waistcoat in what looked like an almost emerald green silk with matching shoes with low square heels. A gorgeous outfit.

I walked over toward her, taking a glass off Alice’s tray as she walked by. Standing beside Greta was an older man and another woman of about Greta’s age. The man was medium height, thin, and very elegant, probably in his late sixties. His hair was slightly long and cut in a modish style, with bushy sideburns. He was dressed in something that wasn’t quite tails or a tuxedo but wasn’t quite a suit either. It looked a bit like an old-fashioned banker’s outfit, with a black jacket and grey-and-black-striped slacks. The jacket was cut out slightly in the front, hinting at a tail without being stuffy. Under it, he had what looked to me like a board shirtfront and collar, which definitely was very stuffy. He was wearing a broad orange sash with a matching bow-tie. And some medals and ribbons over his heart. It was spectacular. I’d thought that I was well dressed, but this was a different league.

The woman standing beside him was about as tall as Greta. Another good-looking woman. She wore her slightly greying, originally blonde hair in a no-nonsense bun. Apart from some red lipstick, she was wearing very little makeup — some eyeliner, maybe, and a hint of eyeshadow. She was also the least formally

dressed person in the group — a fairly standard mid-calf cocktail dress, black with lace sleeves and décolletage. Black low-heeled pumps. *Pret á porter*.

“Sendie!” Greta exclaimed again as I arrived in front of them. We brushed cheeks and then she began to introduce the people standing beside her.

“Sendie,” she said. “I will be happy for you to meet my friends here: De Jonkheer Dirk van Bergen-Aarts, consul general van Nederland.” He gave a formal nod, which I reciprocated.

“And this is my old and dear friend also from Amsterdam, Mrs. Erik Cooper.” Cooper was pronounced the Dutch way, *Koh-per*. Mrs. Cooper smiled at me and reached out her hand. We shook. She had a delicate touch.

Greta then turned to her guests.

“Dirk, Freddie, I would like to introduce you to my boyfriend, Douglas Sanderson. Everybody calls him ‘Sendie.’”

By “boyfriend,” Greta meant “my friend who is a man” rather than “my lover,” of course, on the model of “girlfriend” for a woman’s close female friends. But I didn’t mind her calling me her boyfriend. “Her” anything, in fact. I blushed a little.

“Actually, I think we may have met before, Mr. Sanderson,” the consul began. “I was with Prince Bernhard in the last few months of the war and Mr. McCrae tells me you and he were with Civil Affairs. Perhaps you were at the Achterveld Conference?”

The Achterveld Conference was one of the strangest things that happened in the war — certainly in my experience, but also, from what I’ve read, in everybody else’s.

It took place in April 1945. By that point, it was clear to everybody that the war was over. Roosevelt was dead, the Americans had met the Russians on the Elbe, and Berlin was almost entirely in Soviet hands. The only questions were how many more men would have to die to bring things to a close, how much more damage the fighting would cause, and what would happen to the leading Nazis after the surrender. We knew about the concentration camps, and while the general public was still worried about a “National Redoubt” — a fortress in the mountains where rumours said the Nazis were planning to make a last stand — anybody with access to intelligence knew that nobody in charge thought this was likely anymore: Bradley had got under them before they could head south and the German army was encircled. We were more worried that Nazi leaders would try to escape among the crowds of displaced civilians wandering across and behind our lines than that they might make a bloody last stand somewhere along the Austrian border.

In early April, the Dutch government-in-exile received a secret communication from members of the civilian government in the occupied part of the Netherlands indicating that the German Gauleiter, Seyss-Inquart, wanted to talk. His goal was not so much to surrender — Hitler was not yet dead, and it was as much as old “Six-and-a-quarter”’s life was worth even to propose the idea. Instead, he wanted to ensure that he stayed on Eisenhower’s good side in the final days of the war. He’d heard our warnings about war crimes and being held personally responsible for unnecessary damage to the civilian infrastructure and he figured being seen to do something to mitigate the damage might help him escape the hangman. By the end of April, a temporary truce had been arranged and he was brought across the

front lines for a secret conference with representatives of the Canadian, British, American, and Russian armies — along with a number of other Nazi generals, members of the Dutch underground, and the so-called secret councillors: civilian authorities who had been working on the German side of the lines but also liaising with us.

That was the Achterveld conference and the result was an agreement between the United Nations and the Nazi occupiers that allowed Allied forces to begin shipping food across the front lines to feed the civilian population. At first this was by air, using heavies from the RAF and USAAF. But when it became clear that we simply couldn't get enough food across that way, an agreement was reached that the Canadians would begin trucking supplies across the lines, starting on April 30 and continuing right through to the end of the war.

We hosted the conference, supplying a lot of the clerical support, infrastructure, transportation, and security. This was the first big conference in which the new civilian Dutch government was going to play a role, and Civil Affairs went all in. Fitz and I were there as part of the Canadian staff. The conference took place over two days in the village church and school.

Van Bergen-Aarts said that he had been part of Bernhard's staff at the conference, and while I had no recollection of him, it was certainly the case that we worked closely with Bernhard's men. He told us that he'd been responsible for liaising with the members of the underground and the secret councillors who had crossed over the front lines to take part and prepare for the end of the war.

"For us, the cold war started in Achterveld," Van Bergen-Aarts said. "While there

were still Dutchmen on both sides, everybody could see that we would soon have to work together in a larger geopolitical sense. We had men whom we wanted to secure among the secret councillors and members of the underground, even among the collaborators. After the Germans surrendered, there would soon be new enemies and new opportunities. We needed to make sure that the right people got together beforehand to prepare for the next confrontation. We had learned our lesson from the invasion of our homeland in 1940, and Churchill wasn't the only one who saw that an iron curtain was falling across Europe. Bernhard was also very aware of the communist threat, especially among the underground groups who had helped fight for our liberation. We had to be careful to limit their influence on the post-war reconstruction."

At this point, Greta interrupted us.

"You men," she said. "You think that you are the only ones with war stories. You forget that we women too had to live through it — and some of us were stuck on the other side! Things can be much worse for the women than for the men in wars."

She turned to Van Bergen-Aarts, touching him on the arm.

"I wonder, Dirk, if it would be okay that I take Freddie and Sendie and leave you to stand here for a while. These two are my thickest friends, even though they don't know each other. And I have some business for them together."

Van Bergen-Aarts bowed again, stepped forward, and then kissed cheeks with Greta and Mrs. Cooper. He reached out and shook my hand. Grabbing our arms, Greta moved the two of us farther back into the corner.

"Dirk is such a wonderful man," she said as we walked to the corner. "But like all

men, Sendie, he talks too much." I took the warning. "Freddie is the reason that we are having this party, and I want very much that you should meet her."

Mrs. Cooper and I nodded to each other once again.

"It is nice for me to haf met you, Mr. Zanderson," Mrs. Cooper began. Her English was very stiff, sounding to me more German than Dutch.

"Call him Sendie," Greta interrupted. "I want both of you to be friends. Sendie, you must call her Freddie as well."

"Sandy! Freddie!" Behind me I heard Fitz call us. The three of us turned toward the rest of the room. Fitz was walking toward us, arms open for an embrace.

"Great to see the two of you together!" Fitz said, slapping my back and touching Freddie on the arm. He turned to Greta. "I was hoping to have a quick chat with Sandy here in my office," he said. "Could I have him for a few minutes?"

"Fitz, you know that I wanted to introduce Freddie and Sendie from the moment we said that we would have this party," Greta answered peevishly. Freddie and I looked at our shoes. Marital strife. "Why do I not bring him over to you when they have had a chance to talk?"

Fitz held up his hands in surrender. "Okay, okay," he said. "You win." And turning to me: "Sandy, I'd still like a word with you when you get the chance."

And then, using the name we used to give command meetings in the field: "An O-Group."

"Sure, Fitz. A bit later on maybe."

"Great," he said, turning on his heel. "Make sure you find me."

"Thanks, dear," he added over his shoulder.

"Finally." Greta sighed. She took a breath and reaching out turned us back toward her, forming a circle.

"Sendie," she began. "Freddie and I know each other from Amsterdam from during the war. She was a refugee, and I helped her brother for a while in the Hunger Winter.

"I do not know if you've been following the newspapers on this, but recently there was a lawsuit in Germany between Freddie's sister and a German judge. She had discovered that her brother was put to death unjustly after the war was over. In a Canadian POW camp, except by the German army!"

The coin dropped. Beck and Dorfer. The two Germans. Beck had a couple of sisters who were still alive. Berthilde and Fredegund.

"Are you Fredegund Beck?" I asked.

"Ja," she answered. "Beck is my mädchen's name. I become Cooper after the war when I marry my man, Erik. You read of this case of my brother, then?"

I told them both of the work that I had been doing since first reading about it that weekend in October.

"But this is fantastic!" Greta exclaimed. "I wanted you to meet Freddie because I thought you could help her. She is in Canada to find out more about her brother and both the Germans and the Dutch governments are not doing so much to help her."

"The Canadian government is also not very helpful," Freddie added. "Our lawyer runs into a Papierkrieg — a paper war, if you can say that in English. He does not know if he is up or down, he says to me."

We discussed the case for a little while. It turned out that what I suspected in the beginning had been true after all: Greta had known Rainer Beck and it was her group who had provided the safe house for him when he had first deserted — just like they had helped Freddie get set up when she first moved to Amsterdam. Fitz had been wrong when he said Greta knew nothing about it.

“I have found this all to be very distressing, Sendie,” Greta said. “We did not know what happened to Rainer after the war. He went out on the day before V-E Day and never came back. I thought that he had been killed in one of the shootouts that happened this day and the next. Because he had false papers, I thought perhaps he had been buried without them letting us know. These were terrible days: the war was almost over and we had a truce with the Germans, but they were still picking up and ‘losing’ resistance fighters.

“Freddie and I wrote to her sister, Berthilde, in Köln soon after to tell her that he was missing and that we thought he was dead. We did not know that he had been captured and certainly not that he had been executed!”

I told them that I didn’t think there was much I could do — but also that I’d be happy to help if I could. I gave Freddie one of my cards and told her to call me if she thought I could do anything for her.

“I’m really sorry for you and your sister, Freddie,” I said. “It’s a sad story, even twenty years later. I’m sure it doesn’t help, but from what I’ve read, it sounds like the soldiers who did it were very upset by the orders as well. I don’t think that excuses them, but at least nobody was celebrating.”

“Thank you so much, Sendie,” Greta said. “It is sad news, but I am glad that you

will get to know each other. Freddie is here for another couple of weeks to visit with me and talk to a Canadian lawyer. I hope that we will see so much more of each other!

“Now, let’s put unpleasant business aside for a while,” she continued. “Sandy, Fitz wanted to see you, and I can see that he is not going to let you go until you do. He is standing over by the drinks table but staring at us. It must be important if it is keeping him from his whisky! Perhaps you better go and release him from his anxiety while Freddie and I have some girls’ talk.”

Chapter 26

I walked across the room to the bar. Fitz took a couple of steps toward me and grabbed me by the arm.

“Thanks for taking the time, Sandy,” he said. “Let’s go down to my office. I have a couple of things I want to speak with you about.”

We left the reception room and headed down the back stairs, which were usually used by the staff. The halls, floors, and ceilings this way had a more utilitarian, less well-maintained appearance. The door to the kitchen was open as we passed. I looked in and saw Ida talking to a workman. Small, dark, mid-fifties or early sixties, maybe even seventies. I find it hard to tell with Mediterraneans. A sport coat in a heavy tweed or wool, with a short woollen tie. He held a beat-up but very wide-brimmed fedora in his hand. Old Country. Ida looked quite upset. She pushed the man in frustration as I passed.

We continued out of the servants’ hallway and into the main corridor downstairs. Things were luxurious again. Finally, Fitz stopped at his office door. He took out a key and unlocked it. He opened the door and then stepped back, ushering me inside.

I’ve always thought that Fitz’s office looked more like a regimental club than a lawyer’s office. It’s at the back of the house on the ground floor, with two large French doors that look out onto a flagstone patio and the rest of the backyard. At the end of the yard, over a stone wall, there’s Craigleith Gardens, the grounds of a

former estate that was willed to the city as a park in the late 1800s. The windows on this side of the building are north-facing but large enough to let in a lot of light during the day. Beyond that, however, the room is very dark. The walls have a tall dark-oak wainscotting, and the plaster above is painted a dark cream colour. There is a ceiling lamp, but I've never seen it on. The wall switch as you come in can also turn on the floor lamps spread around the room and Fitz always uses that. It looks smoky even if somebody isn't smoking.

Above the wainscotting, the walls are filled with plaques, photos, and other regimental memorabilia, all connected, of course, to the 48th. On the wall to the right of his desk, Fitz has a number of different regimental signs, banners, and flags: the regimental seal and motto, a regimental flag, the red ensign and a Union Jack, and the wooden board we used to put outside our HQ during the war, with the words "HQ Coy / Cdn 48th Highl." painted on it in green.

The wall facing his desk is a kind of small arms museum. On the left side of the door, he has a display of infantry rifles he'd picked up or bartered for during his time overseas: a Lee-Enfield, of course, but also a Mauser 98k, an American M1, an Italian Carcano, a Russian Mosin-Nagant, and in the middle, occupying pride of place, a Thompson 1928 with stick magazine. On the right, he has an equally varied collection of pistols: a Luger, PPK, Beretta 35, U.S. Navy 1911 with ivory handle, Russian Tokarev, Mauser Broomhandle, and Canadian Colt Special.

Finally, on the wall to his left, he has a picture gallery: photographs of the countryside and various groups of soldiers from Sicily right through to my demob party in the winter of 1945 and some photos of a very pregnant Greta in

Amsterdam.

As we entered the room, he led me over to one of the armchairs in front of his desk, gesturing for me to sit. There was a tap at the open door behind me, and I heard Alice's voice announce the Dutch consul.

"I asked Dirk to come down as well," Fitz said. "I thought between the two of us, we could probably tell you a story."

Van Bergen-Aarts came in and sat down beside me, pulling his trousers up slightly as he did so. The gesture irritated me, unreasonably. Alice closed the door quietly behind us.

Fitz sat on the corner of his desk facing me. The consul turned a quarter in his chair to look at me as well.

"It's about Freddie and this Dutch execution story," Fitz began. "I'd wanted to catch you before Greta had a chance to talk to you about it or introduce you to Freddie."

"She didn't really have much to say," I started to answer. "Really just –"

"The thing is, I didn't tell you the whole truth when you asked me about this at the game, Sandy," Fitz went on, talking over me. "I was pretty drunk, as you saw, but I have to admit that some of it was a show. I was worried about what you might know, and, more importantly, what you might discuss with Greta or about Greta with others."

"I'm not quite following you, Fitz," I said. It looked like this was to be my fate on this story.

"The thing that was worrying me was Greta's involvement in it. I guess she must

have told you upstairs, but Freddie was Greta's best friend in Amsterdam during the war, and Greta had both run the safe house that Freddie's brother fled to after he deserted, and recruited him to join her cell. She was probably the last person to see him alive."

"Sure, I get that, Fitz, but I'm still not seeing why you are so worried about all this. Greta didn't seem that upset to me just now. In fact, she looked like she was determined to get to the bottom of it and *not* have it swept under the rug."

"Well, when we were talking before the game that day," Fitz began, "I had only just read the first couple of articles on it. They were asking questions of everybody who'd been involved, and there was a strong sense that people were going to be blamed. At first, I was mostly worried that Greta would provide them with another angle on this and that she'd get caught up in it. 'How could the underground have let him go?' 'Why didn't somebody follow up to see what happened?' 'Why didn't anybody let his family know what had happened?' That kind of thing. It was bad enough for the Seaforths. I didn't want Greta getting the blame as well. Or instead."

"But there's actually a bit more to it than even that, Sandy," Fitz continued. "And that's why I asked Dirk to join us."

"Yes," Van Bergen-Aarts said, jumping in. "You see, Mr. Sanderson, there was a lot more going on at the time than you have read in these stories thus far."

"What we're trying to say," Fitz added, "is that it wasn't a SNAFU, at least in the beginning. Even I didn't know all the details until Dirk and I spoke a bit about it before the party this evening. I wanted to make sure you knew as well." He turned to Van Bergen-Aarts.

“Dirk?” he asked, giving him the floor.

Van Bergen-Aarts turned toward me in his chair. He crossed one leg carefully over the other. He was wearing glasses at this point, but he took them off, folded them slowly, and placed them in an inside pocket of his jacket. He leaned slightly back and made a throat-clearing noise. There was going to be another lecture.

“It all goes back to Achterveld, Mr. Sanderson,” Van Bergen-Aarts began. “Or perhaps better said, Achterveld marked the end of one thing and the beginning of the next. The moment of transition at which the Kingdom of the Netherlands moved from World War II to what we were determined would not become World War III.”

It sounded like a line he’d practised before.

I leaned back deeper into my chair. I could tell it wasn’t going to be short.

Chapter 27

“As I’m sure you know,” Van Bergen-Aarts said, “the Dutch resistance during the war was at the same time both loosely coordinated and in relatively close communication with the Government-in-Exile in London. The individual cells didn’t know much about each other and operated with great freedom. But we had a steady stream of people going back and forth between the two countries — aircrew and others trying to get back to England, and SOE and OSS men coming the other way.

“We were fully engaged, the entire time.”

He paused slightly, presumably to allow this to sink in. I remembered that he’d been very pleased with his role in all this upstairs as well.

“At least, we were until the spring of 1942,” he said dramatically. “At that point, however, the Abwehr, the German military intelligence, began playing our people against us. They had arrested a British agent the previous fall and had found all our codebooks on him. Then they started broadcasting calls back to England, arranging for supplies and agents to be dropped in support of the underground. But in reality it was the Germans who were sending the messages and they would be lying in wait when the drops came.

“This was known as the *Englandspiel*, or the ‘English game,’ and more than fifty agents were compromised in this way before we finally discovered what was going on and brought things to an end. We began to realize that something was wrong by

the end of 1943 and were sure later that spring. By March we had stopped sending supplies or men. The official end, if you can call it that, came on April Fool's Day, when the officer leading the German counter-intelligence group sent us an uncoded message lamenting the loss of our business."

I thought it was odd that they took three months to act on suspicions that their agents were compromised. And I wasn't impressed that they finally figured it out only a month before the Germans burned the program themselves. But I held my tongue. I was sure Van Bergen-Aarts would have a lengthy explanation, should I wish to hear it. And I did not.

"The person behind all this on the German side was a certain Anton van der Waals, a Dutch machinist who had infiltrated a number of underground groups during the war, in order to help the Germans roll them up," Van Bergen-Aarts continued.

"He was particularly active within communist circles in the underground, and yet somehow managed always to avoid suspicion. He would 'escape just in time' when the Gestapo burst into a meeting room. If he was picked up in a razzia, he'd be held until the other members of his cell were liquidated, eliminating all the witnesses.

"By the spring of 1945, people had finally begun to suspect that they had a traitor in their midst, and things began to get hot for him. Nobody was *sure* that it was Van der Waals, however, and, unfortunately, one of the women in the group killed another man first on the mistaken suspicion that it was him. But Van der Waals also was beginning to be seen as having had just a little too much luck. So

the Germans decided to pull him out for good. And for this, they used a cute little charade.”

Van Bergen-Aarts paused, professorially. Waiting for questions.

Nobody said anything.

“Van der Waals had just started working with the HS-9 cell,” he began again, after it was clear we weren't going to prompt him.

I decided it might be fun to interrupt after all.

“That's the group Greta was in, wasn't?” I asked.

“That's right, Sandy,” Fitz answered. “This is one of the reasons I was so worried about it all.”

Van Bergen-Aarts paused again and looked at us. Giving the students a moment to settle. Greta was right, he did like to hear himself talk.

“As I was saying,” he began again. “The Germans arranged a little play in order to get Van der Waals out — to bring him ‘in from the cold’, as your Mr. Le Carré might put it.

“The plan was to arrange a meeting between Gerrit van den Berg, a journalist and founder of the HS-9 cell, and ‘Luke’, which was the name Van der Waals was using to infiltrate them. But then — and this was the really clever part — they intercepted van den Berg *before* he got to his meeting with Luke.”

I looked at him uncomprehendingly.

“The point was to make everybody think that *Luke* was the one who had been betrayed,” Van Bergen-Aarts explained, speaking more slowly than normal, willing us to understand. “And also, of course, to make everybody think that it was van

den Berg, the person who'd begun to suspect Luke, who had done the betraying. This way, when the Germans took Van der Waals away, nobody would suspect that they were, in fact, rescuing him."

He paused again. Once more, we stayed silent, disappointing him.

"A brilliant plan, really, when you think about it," he said after a moment, deciding to comment for us. "Really very clever." He shook his head in awe.

"After they interrogated van den Berg," he said, speeding back up again, "they raided the café where he was supposed to meet Luke — which was, of course, under observation by other members of the cell. They saw Luke get arrested in a very showy way — the point, after all, was to make the people who most suspected Van der Waals become convinced of his innocence — and taken to Gestapo headquarters."

"I don't understand what any of this has to do with Achterveld," I said, trying to get him back on track. "Or, more importantly, with Greta. Or Beck."

"Ah yes, well," he began again. "'The best-laid schemes of mice and men,' as I believe your Shakespeare says. Achterveld, you see, was where things started to go wrong."

"It was Burns," I said. Van Bergen-Aarts looked at me uncomprehendingly.

"It was Burns who said 'the best-laid schemes of mice and men,' not Shakespeare."

"I don't think that's the point, Sandy," Fitz said. "Dirk was telling you about what went wrong. What it has to do with Achterveld."

"And it's 'agley'," I said.

"Huh?" Fitz replied.

"That's what happens to 'best-laid plans,'" I said. "They go 'agley,' not 'wrong'. 'Aft agley' even."

"For Christ's sake, Sandy!" Fitz shouted at me. "Let it go. Can we let Dirk finish the story?"

"Yes, well," Van Bergen-Aarts began again, now that the disturbance at the back of the class was over. "As I told you upstairs, by the time we met in Achterveld, everybody knew that the war was over. And everybody who had eyes knew that it was only a matter of time — perhaps even months — before the next one began. With the Soviet Union. There were many of us in those days who argued that the Western Allies should keep going — roll right through Berlin, and then, with the help of the anti-communist elements in the defeated German army, continue east, pushing the Russians back behind their original borders."

I noticed suddenly that Van Bergen-Aarts always called them "Germans," never "Nazis."

"So after Van der Waals was 'killed' by the Germans to get him away from HS-9, he got in touch with us. He knew that he would not be able to live in the Netherlands after the war. If he were to reappear, then people would know for sure that he had been a collaborator — and that would mean either a government noose, if he was lucky, or an underworld garrote, if he was not.

"But of course, Van der Waals also had skills that we would need in the new post-war world. He had a long and successful history of working undercover, particularly with communist groups, and he had shown time and time again that he

could infiltrate and get information from underground cells without being caught, or really even suspected. In other words, he knew that we knew that we could use him.”

“Who was ‘we’?” I asked.

“‘We’ was everybody,” Van Bergen-Aarts answered tartly. “The Dutch Secret Service, MI6, the Americans, even you, the Canadians. Field Security. In the last couple of weeks of the war, as the Germans tried to surrender to the Western Allies rather than the Eastern, we all realized that this was our chance to prepare for the next round. To find the Germans, and those who worked for them, who knew who the real enemy was.”

“I thought it was the Jews who were the real enemy,” I said, laying on the sarcasm. “If I remember correctly, there was this ‘Eternal Jew’ fellow that Hitler kept going on about. They say he was up to no good.”

“That was for the masses,” Van Bergen-Aarts said primly. “More sophisticated people always understood ‘the Jew’ as a kind of synecdoche: a part-for-the-whole, if you will. A lot of communists were Jews. And socialists more generally.”

“Auschwitz didn’t seem all that symbolic to me,” I snapped. “Or sophisticated.”

“They also put communists in the camps,” Van Bergen-Aarts replied.

“My point exactly,” I said, though I was beginning to wonder what his was.

“I’m not convinced that the Soviets were our enemy then,” I continued — I was getting tired of people who seemed to forget who we’d been fighting at the time. “And certainly not that we shared them as an enemy with the Nazis. And I’m *absolutely* sure that the Dutch communists were not a threat.

"But I also don't believe that we were trying to protect this Van der Waals character. Like everybody in Civil Affairs, I knew about him. In fact, he was one of the reasons we were interviewing people like Greta — to figure out who the collaborators had been and *stop* them from working for the new civilian government. And they caught and executed him a year or two later, anyway, didn't they?"

Van Bergen-Aarts got up out of his chair and walked to the French doors. He stared out into the yard for a second before turning toward us.

"Yes, Mr. Sanderson," he replied at last. "He was arrested in Berlin in 1947 and executed in Den Haag in 1950."

He had his hand behind him on the door handle and he pushed down absent-mindedly as he spoke. It opened outward, seeming to surprise him. He closed it again carefully and gently, then stepped away, rubbing his hands together.

"Yes, he was captured in '47 and executed in 1950," he repeated, walking toward us. He put his left hand behind his back and raised his right, pointing.

"But the question you should be asking yourself, Mr. Sanderson, is this: 'How did he manage to survive *until* he was arrested'? Hmm? Have you ever thought about that? How did somebody as sought after as Van der Waals get away? Survive the end of the war? And what was he doing in Berlin? How did he get there? How could he not be picked up by the British or the Americans — or the Soviets, for that matter, since his main victims were Dutch communists? Seyss-Inquart was picked up at a roadblock by some of your men, and, in the end, we got almost all the top-level Germans at one kind of control or another. And yet Van der Waals, the most

wanted man in Holland, a mere machinist, managed to escape — and live with a girlfriend in the most guarded city in Europe — for two years!”

He had reached the desk again by this point. As he spoke the final sentence, he tapped his right hand on the edge of the desk.

“All right. All right,” I answered. “I’ve read *Le Carré* too. He was working for MI6, I’m guessing from all this. Playing some kind of cat-and-mouse game. Smiley, the Circus, Moles. Got it.”

“You are close, Mr. Sanderson,” Van Bergen-Aarts said with a smile. “You are close. But not *for* MI6. *With* MI6. He was working *for* us, the Dutch secret services, but *with* MI6 and with what later became the CIA for the Americans.”

“This is where Beck comes back into play, Sandy,” Fitz said, interrupting. I had the impression he thought this was being drawn out too long as well.

I looked at him.

“You see, Beck found out.”

“Found out what?” I asked.

“That we had him,” Van Bergen-Aarts answered, taking centre stage again. “He found out that we had Van der Waals.”

“That’s what this Achterveld business is about, Sandy,” Fitz explained, cutting in again. “That’s where we took him over.”

“Did you not wonder, Mr. Sanderson, why the operation to have the Canadians deliver food to the Dutch that came out of the Achterveld Conference was called ‘Operation Faust’?”

Van Bergen-Aarts had returned to his chair by this point. He stood behind it.

Hands on the back. I suddenly realized who he reminded me of. Goldfinger. A Bond villain. Fleming, not Le Carré. He didn't look anything like the actor who played him in the movie. But he had the same way of speaking.

Van Bergen-Aarts was looking at me. After he caught my eye, he began again.

"The other two operations — to deliver food to the Dutch by air by the RAF and the USAAF — were called 'Operation Manna' and 'Operation Chowhound.' These are self-explanatory names, are they not? Meant for newsreels and to make people back home feel good about what their boys are doing overseas."

He waved dismissively, then turned around and started walking back to the French doors, speaking over his shoulder as he went. I started to chuckle inside. I couldn't get Goldfinger out of my head.

"But 'Faust', Mr. Sanderson? 'Faust'? Tell me: why would you call the third plan to deliver food across the front lines 'Operation Faust'? There is no publicity value in this, no? And yet Faust was by far the more dangerous operation. Much more dangerous than dropping food from a heavily armed strategic bomber. What is going on here? I ask you, Mr. Sanderson. What in the hell is going on?"

He reached the door and turned dramatically back toward us, finger raised. I looked at Fitz and sighed.

"No, Mr. Bond, I expect you to die!"

"Pardon?" Van Bergen-Aarts asked. He said the word the Dutch or French way, drawing out the last syllable. I hadn't realized I was speaking out loud.

"Nothing, sorry. I was trying to process what you were saying." It's tough dealing with supervillains. Especially if they have good hearing.

Fitz was looking at me, surprised. He was close enough to have heard clearly.

Van Bergen-Aarts started back up again, pacing this time back toward us.

"The reason why, Mr. Sanderson, is because Operation Faust was not about food." He paused again dramatically. "It is because it was not about food.

"I'm sure you know the story of Dr. Faust: the physician who sold his soul to the devil in exchange for universal knowledge. Well, this was also the purpose of Operation Faust. We used the operation to gain the knowledge of the devil's own workers — collaborationists such as Van der Waals, and others — whom we slipped across the front lines and made to disappear during the Achterveld Conference and during the shipments thereafter."

"I thought you said they weren't devils. Just anti-communists whose use of symbolism had been misunderstood." I couldn't help myself.

"The name was Bernhard's idea," Van Bergen-Aarts answered offhandedly, ignoring the jibe.

"And while indeed it is true that I wouldn't say precisely that we were dealing with the devil, I would say that it was an exchange of knowledge for virtue. I think this is how it always is in our line of work, would you not say? 'Intelligence work has one moral purpose: to win!'"

"That comes from a dime-store novel," I answered. "Not Spinoza."

Van Bergen-Aarts looked at me.

"Your Spinoza," I added.

Fitz jumped in before I could say anything more. I could see he was getting worried about me.

"I think what Dirk is trying to get at here, Sandy, is that it was at the Achterveld Conference that the whole Rainer Beck thing got started.

"You see, that was where we agreed to take Van der Waals over. You remember how at Achterveld we had all the secret councillors and members of the Dutch underground cross the lines? Well, Van der Waals was supposed to come across with them. And then once he was on our side, we were supposed to put him in a Canadian uniform and take him away for interrogation by the security services — ours, MI6, the Dutch. That's what Dirk was doing there. He was supposed to help us get Van der Waals out."

"And?" I asked. "Did you? Did you pick him up? Did he turn out to be as important or useful as you thought?"

"Yes," Van Bergen-Aarts answered. He was still lecturing. "Or at least we thought so at the time. We did get him across the lines and he was ultimately used by us as a spy in East Berlin. But we got very little intelligence from him and we began to think he might be a double agent working for the Russians against us. That is why we let news get out that he was alive and arranged for him to be arrested when he came back to the West in '47."

"But the thing about Achterveld, Sandy," Fitz added, steering things back again, "is that we also got caught — at the conference. We'd invited members of the underground to the meeting, and Greta's cell sent Rainer Beck. But he'd also been part of the group who'd been watching the café where Van der Waals had been picked up as Luke by the Germans when they were trying to retire him.

"Sometime during the conference, he saw and recognized Van der Waals.

Which meant he knew that Van der Waals *had* been a collaborator after all.

“But more importantly, he saw that Van der Waals wasn’t part of the group who went back across the line when the conference was over. So not only was Luke not dead, he seemed to have vanished behind our lines.”

“But how do you know all this, Fitz?” I asked. “How do you know what Beck saw when we never interviewed him?”

“Well, that’s the bit I’m not proud of, Sandy,” Fitz answered. He paused. I looked at him. Leaning back on the desk, he raised his left leg up and stared at it.

“You see, we did interview him,” he said at last. “Just not the usual way.”

I looked at him. Things were starting to make a bit more sense now. Or at least his behaviour at the game.

“The thing is, Beck didn’t realize the importance of what he’d seen — other than that Van der Waals was alive and had been the traitor — until he got back to Amsterdam. He saw the shootouts in Amsterdam. He understood that the remaining Germans were fanatical and that we were trying to round them up. And suddenly he thought that perhaps we didn’t know that Van der Waals had ‘escaped.’ Remember how worried everybody was about ‘redoubts’ and ‘rat-lines’ and all the rest? Beck suddenly thought that maybe Van der Waals was out setting something like that up for after the war.”

“Well, from what you’re telling me, he was,” I answered. “Just with our help, instead of working against us.”

“Sure, you can see it like that, I guess,” Fitz answered. “Which is another reason why I’m not proud of what happened. But at the time, we saw it as a security matter

and preparing for the Russians. As you know from the papers, Beck went out on May 7 to turn himself in to the Canadians — but what you don't know is that the reason he was so insistent was that he wanted to warn us about Van der Waals."

"And so how come he didn't come to me?" I asked. "It was my team who interviewed people like him — including Greta and the other members of her cell who would have known about him. I mean, we were also looking for Luke."

"Yes, but remember that we didn't want your group to find him," Van Bergen-Aarts answered. He was now sitting on the edge of the desk as well, beside Fitz.

"So when he showed up saying that he'd not only seen Van der Waals alive but had seen him escape at the Achterveld Conference, we knew that we had to give him a special treatment — keep him away from people like you and your men who could put two and two together but also pretend to be looking into what he was telling us so that he wouldn't become suspicious."

"And so that's how he ended up in the POW camp?" I asked.

"That bit I don't know," Fitz said. "When news came in that we had somebody who'd seen Van der Waals, I had him sent to me and then after that on to Dirk and MI6."

"And we debriefed him," Van Bergen-Aarts said, "and tried to convince him that he must have been mistaken. We kept him for a few days at a pretend debriefing camp, and put him in with a number of secret service officers who were pretending to be members of the underground. And then, when we were finished, we handed him back to your people so he could be let go or dealt with according to the normal channels."

“And I’m guessing that was the Seaforths then?” I asked.

“I think so, Sandy,” Fitz answered. “This is where it *does* become a SNAFU. And regimental — like you said at the game.

“So my guess is that the Seaforths must have thought he was a POW because he came to them from the security people,” he continued. “Everybody knew that it was your group who was handling the actual underground fighters and the real deserters, and also that Germans who’d fought right up to the last day were trying to get out of internment by claiming that they’d really been deserters. So when they were given this guy who said he was a deserter but wasn’t coming from your group, I guess they figured that he was just another clown trying to get out of a final couple of weeks in the cage. I bet they thought it was only just deserts when they told the Wehrmacht officers what he’d said to them — that he was actually a collaborator who’d tried to work with us.”

“And then of course everything spun out of control,” I added.

“And then of course everything spun out of control,” Fitz agreed.

I wasn’t really happy with this as an explanation. But it did cover most of what I’d heard.

“But what about this General Witt character?” I asked. “He seems to have been pretty intent on getting rid of both Beck and Dorfer.”

“I really wonder if this is true, Mr. Sanderson,” Van Bergen-Aarts answered. “This General Witt. Witt is a German surname. And as your newspapers say, there was no Canadian called Witt. I think the German judge has made up this story to avoid the blame but that he was not smart enough to think up a Canadian name.”

"Yeah," Fitz said, "I think things were probably a lot more straightforward in that regard than the newspapers think."

"At the end, you mean," I answered. "The rest of this is like a spy novel."

"Yeah. I mean at the end."

Van Bergen-Aarts stood up. "Espionage, as they say, Mr. Sanderson, is not a cricket game."

Chapter 28

At that moment, there was a knock on the door.

“Fitz?”

It was Greta. The handle turned and she leaned her head in.

“Ah, there you are.” She stepped into the room. “I am sorry to disturb you all, but you are being a very poor host, Fitzpatrick McCrae. You are monopolizing Dirk and Sendie, and ignoring your other guests.”

“I’m sorry,” Fitz answered. “I lost track of the time. Dirk and I wanted to talk to Sandy about one of his cases.”

“Well, perhaps you could set up an appointment for some other time, if it is going to take all night. It is not nice to leave your own party like this. Freddie has said she would like to go to bed soon, and our other guests are starting to leave.”

“We’ll be right up, schat,” Fitz answered, using a Dutch term of endearment. “We are done here anyway.”

“In that case, why do you not all come now with me back upstairs?” Greta asked, turning and heading out the door.

I started to get up out of my chair. Fitz made a zipping movement with his hand across his lips.

“Mum’s the word on this Sandy, all right? I don’t want Greta to be upset.”

He was speaking low, trying to stop his voice travelling.

“I’ll do my best, Fitz. But I don’t know exactly how to handle this: Freddie and

Greta asked me for help in getting them information on the executions.”

“I’m sure you’ll figure something out,” he answered. “This can’t be the first time you’ve had to keep clients’ information private.”

This didn’t seem to me to be the same thing, but there wasn’t any time to argue. Van Bergen-Aarts had walked to the door and now turned to face us.

“Shall we go up, gentlemen?” he asked.

“After you both,” Fitz answered, making a sweeping movement with his hand. “Sandy, please.”

I stood up and walked to the door. Greta was standing at the foot of the stairs, by the kitchen door, waiting for us.

“It is like dealing with little toddlers,” she said. “Honestly! I think I better walk behind to make sure nobody loses their way.”

She pressed herself against the wall, letting Van Bergen-Aarts pass. As I put my foot on the first step, she touched my arm.

“I think you should walk with teacher, Sendie, as you have been an especially naughty little boy.” She pulled me back and pressed me against the wall beside her. “Come on, Fitz, set on through!”

Fitz stepped past us and Greta pushed me to follow. We headed up the stairs and into the library.

“What is it that you are not allowed to say to me?” she asked after the others had gone into the library. “Fitz would not have held you down there so long with Dirk if it was not something important.”

“Oh, just business, Greta. You know I can’t talk about that with anybody else.

Even his wife. Perhaps if you ask him, he can tell you if there was anything important to say.”

“As long as you are doing the same for me, Sendie. I do not want him to know anything about my worries for him.”

“I remember. And I haven’t told him anything. I’m not sure if I can keep taking business from the two of you, though,” I said. “It is really hard if you are both asking me about the other.”

“Ah hah! So there is something about me then!”

“I can honestly say that there wasn’t,” I answered. “Though I probably shouldn’t even say that. And I still haven’t really learned anything about your foreigners. Fitz hasn’t said anything to me that seemed unusual or to suggest he was having problems.”

“I also have not heard any calls in the past few weeks,” Greta said. “Either he knows that I am worried about them or something has made them stop.”

“Perhaps it really was just some business,” I said. “With foreigners.”

“Maybe. But I would still like you to keep an eye on him.”

“It’s pretty much all I do, Greta.”

“Well, thank you then. I hope that you and Freddie and I can meet up later this week for coffee. I am serious that I would like you to help her.”

“If I can, Greta, around my other work.”

“I am sure you will do this for me.”

“That’s probably not a bad bet.”

Chapter 29

I was pretty exhausted by this point, and I didn't relish a party in which I was keeping secrets from both my hosts. So I decided to take my leave. I caught up with Freddie and wished her a good night and a pleasant stay in Canada. I reminded her to call me if she needed anything. And I said good night to Fitz, who was now mingling with his other guests. And Greta, who was at the bar. As I left the library, I ran into Ida, who was carrying a tray.

"Un momento, per favore," she said, holding the door to the library open with her foot. And then in English. "Let me put this down and get your coat."

I waited for Ida to come back out. She put her arm through mine and we walked together down the wide front stairway. When we got to the bottom of the stairs, she went to the closet and got my coat. She motioned for me to turn around and helped me put my arms in the sleeves. Handing me my hat, she opened the front door.

After I'd taken a couple of steps, she called after me. "Sandy!"

I turned around and she skipped out toward me. It was very cold and I worried about her in her light dress.

She reached up and wrapped her arms around my neck. Lifting herself up, she kissed the corner of my mouth. Just enough to the side to claim it was a greeting, but close enough to the centre for us both to know it wasn't. She pulled herself in closer and kissed the other corner of my mouth. This one was even less innocent. I could feel her breasts shifting against my chest.

"You're a good man, Sandy," she said. "I'm glad you came."

"Always, a pleasure, Ida," I answered. "Be careful you don't catch your death."

She pushed me away gently and tapped my chest with her hand.

"Good night," she said. "Drive safely."

I said I would and headed toward my car. My senses focused on the places where she had kissed me. Where she had rubbed her breasts against me. A nice feeling.

A light snow had fallen. I got out my brush and swept the windows. Behind me I heard a car door open. Another guest leaving the party. I threw the brush on the floor behind the driver's seat, got in, and started the car.

The easiest way to get home was to turn around and head west on Elm. I started to make a three-point turn. The person who'd come out behind me turned on their headlights and pulled out. They were parked on the other side of the street and so already facing my direction. Since I was blocking the road, they drove toward me and then stopped. A new Valiant. Red. I waved "thanks" and they flashed their high beams. I couldn't see the driver behind the glare. Once I'd completed my turn, the two of us headed down Elm.

My plan was to zigzag west: Elm to Mount Pleasant, Roxborough, Yonge, Macpherson, Avenue Road, and then back on to Edmund. When I got to Mount Pleasant, however, I changed my mind. I could still feel the pressure of Ida's breasts against my chest and the wetness of her mouth against my lips. Ida, Greta, Freddie, Marty, Nymphaea, Anne. All the beautiful women. I felt a rush to my head and turned left instead of right onto Mount Pleasant. The car behind me turned left

as well.

It was about 2 a.m. by this point and there was almost nobody out, except the Valiant. I took Mount Pleasant across Bloor to Jarvis, and then Jarvis downtown past Wellesley, Carlton, Dundas. Behind me, Fitz's guest kept pace.

When I got to Shuter, I turned right and the Valiant continued on, heading south on Jarvis. I wondered briefly what could be down there for a guest of the McCraes, since lower Jarvis is not where that set lives. Adelaide onto the new Parkway? He could have caught it at Bloor. Maybe down to the Gardiner and then west? I wondered if it would really be faster: at this time of night, you'd probably be better just going west along Bloor. And why wouldn't you take the Parkway south from Bloor to the Gardiner in that case anyway?

My mind drifted on as I continued along Shuter across to Church, and then left, past the Metropolitan Church. A group of five young women were standing outside a coffee shop across the street from the cathedral at Queen and Church. They were dressed almost identically: micro-miniskirts or dresses, with knee-high or thigh-high boots. Short jackets. Long hair, parted down the centre, except for the two Negro girls, who were wearing afros.

I decided to turn left onto Lombard and then left again when I got to Jarvis. And then finally left again, heading back around the block along Queen. Another girl was standing on the north side of Queen, just after the intersection. A Caucasian girl, dressed like the others: micro skirt, knee-high white go-go boots, a short lambskin-looking jacket with strips of wool that puffed out over her chest. I pulled over and she stepped toward the car. She opened the passenger door, leaned in,

and looked across at me. Peroxide blonde, maybe twenty-five. A lot of makeup.

"Looking for a friend?" she asked.

"Maybe," I said.

"I've got some time," she answered. She opened the door further and climbed onto the passenger seat beside me. She left the door open and kept one foot outside, hanging across the rocker panel. Her skirt barely covered her lap. The waist of her jacket was cut Eisenhower-style, cinched in tight at the waist. If only Ike knew what he'd started.

"How much?" I asked. If she was an undercover police lady, I was now in big trouble.

"Deuce and a half," she said. "Suck or fuck." Apparently, she wasn't. I nodded. She pulled her foot in and closed the door.

I pulled out and drove across Church, passing across the Metropolitan church again, this time along the south end.

"Turn right here," she said, pointing up Bond Street. "Nobody comes down here at night." I drove slowly, heading north. The backside of St. Michael's Hospital rose up on our left. The church gardens were to our right.

"This should be good," she said about halfway up the block. I pulled over to the church side. We were across the street from a garbage shoot. I turned off my headlights. There was nobody on the sidewalk.

"Well?" she asked, looking across at me.

"Suck," I answered. She reached across, opened my coat, and undid my belt. I felt myself getting hard under her wrist.

She unbuttoned my fly and pulled the sides of my suit trousers apart, revealing my shorts. She ran her hand down the front, wrapping her hand around my erection through the cloth. She let go, and felt with her hand for the opening, looking at my face. I felt her nail against my skin and then her fingers, cold from the night air. She rubbed up and down a couple of times as she pulled me out. I felt my stomach tighten. She bent her face down toward my lap.

Suddenly, it was gone. Only the head was visible now, ha'penny in a nest. She looked back up at me.

"I'm sorry," I said, after a minute. "I don't think it's going to work. I'll still pay you."

There was another moment's silence. The girl gave me a gentle tug. Nothing happened.

"Why don't we call it a deuce," she said, when it was clear things were not going to improve. "And you can drive me back to where you picked me up."

I put myself back together and got a two-dollar bill out of my wallet. I drove up to Shuter, turned right, drove along to Jarvis, then right again, and south down to Queen. The traffic light turned red.

"Drop me off over there," she said, pointing back up Queen.

I went around the corner and pulled over. She opened the door and jumped out.

"Don't let it worry you, hon," she said. "It happens to a lot of the older guys. Maybe your wife will have better luck!"

She stepped out and closed the door behind her. She checked for traffic and then walked across the sidewalk to the coffee shop. A young man came out toward her: long hair, fringed jacket, and greasy-looking bell-bottoms. She handed him my

two-dollar bill. He pulled her back into the café behind him. I watched the door close, and then headed back out onto Queen. There was still nobody about. I drove along, thinking I'd turn right on University, drive up past the Parliament buildings and the museum, then straight up Avenue road to Edmund.

It was late and I should get home.

My cheeks burned.

Chapter 30

I got back to the Rookery about 3 a.m. I let myself into my apartment and headed straight to my bedroom. No toothbrush. No washing up. I threw myself on the bed without undressing and quickly fell asleep.

I had my regular dream — Ortona that wasn't Ortona, stretchers, Doc Grossman yelling at me. I also dreamed that I was stuck in a bakery but was behind with the morning bread. A crowd of housewives was standing outside, banging on the windows using coins and yelling at me to hurry up. But the oven wasn't lighting and there was nothing I could do.

I woke up again about 5 a.m. to pee. While I was in the washroom, I brushed my teeth and took some aspirins with a couple of glasses of water. I hadn't drunk too much the night before, but I could feel a hangover coming on anyway. I got out of my suit and went back to bed. This time under the covers.

I started to dream again. About a street hockey game that was actually a boxing match. I had to fight an opponent who was much stronger, taller, and heavier than me. He was hitting me and I had my hands up, protecting my head. The officials were ringing the bell to end the round. But my opponent wouldn't stop. He kept hitting me and hitting me. Eventually, the officials gave up and let the next round begin. But then they started ringing the bell again, trying to bring the new round to a close.

Suddenly I realised the ringing wasn't a dream. It was the telephone and it had

been ringing for a while. I jumped out of bed, ran through the living room and into the kitchen. I grabbed the phone off the wall and put it to my ear. Dial tone. Whoever had called had hung up. I waited thirty seconds to see if they'd try again. Nothing. I turned and started back to the bedroom. I made it to the door when the phone rang again. I jogged back this time, figuring anybody who was this persistent would let it ring at least seven or eight times.

"Sanderson," I said when I got the horn to my ear.

"I should hope so," said the voice on the other end in a thick Scottish brogue. McDumont.

"Wally," I answered. "What do you want?"

"You, ye daft bugger," he answered. "I've been trying to get you for the past fifteen minutes."

"What time is it?" I asked. I turned around to find the kitchen clock. Quarter to seven.

"Almost seven," Wally answered. "Not what you're used to on a Sunday morning, I imagine. But a Christian-enough hour for the working man."

I really didn't have time for this.

"Out with it, Wally," I said. "I was with some clients last night, and I've got a busy day ahead of me today."

"Right ye are, sir," he answered. "We need ye here."

"It's a telephone, Wally, not a television set. Where's 'here'? And why? What do you need me for?"

"Aye, well, it's not really for me. I can take ye or leave ye, to be honest. But Mrs.

McCrae, here, she has a kinder opinion o' ye, it seems. Though God knows why. She asked me to call ye and tell ye to come as quick as ye can."

"What are you doing with Greta, at..." — I took a quick look back at the kitchen clock — "quarter to seven on a Sunday morning, Wally?" I asked. "Where are you? Is she okay? Has something happened?"

"Perhaps if ye quit talking and start walking, ye'll find out," Wally answered. "We're at Orangefield. Mrs. McCrae is fine. But she'd like ye here."

"Thirty minutes," I said. "I just need to put some clothes on and get into the car."

"See that ye do," Wally answered, hanging up.

I walked back to the washroom, brushed my teeth again, gave my face a wash, and ran a wet comb through my hair. I went into my bedroom and took out a clean suit from the closet. I'd fallen asleep in my new Harry Rosen and I could see that it would need to go to the cleaners for a pressing. I ran out to the hallway, and found my shoes, hat, and coat where I'd dropped them last night. The coat would need a pressing as well and there was a dent in my hat where my coat had fallen on it. But both would have to do for now. I popped out the dent and threw on the coat. I sat down and tied my shoes. Just before I left the apartment, I took a look in the mirror beside the door. I wasn't going to win any prizes, but I was presentable enough for somebody on an emergency call.

Not too bad for a whoring drunk who'd slept in his suit.

When I stepped into the hall, I saw Edie standing opposite me, in her dressing gown, holding a teacup in her hand.

"You're up early, Mr. Sanderson," she said. "And after a night carousing till all

hours too. You're no longer the youngest of bucks, you know."

"And good morning to you, Mrs. McNeill," I snapped. I was being rude but couldn't help myself. I had a headache and was trying to think what could be the matter that Greta would want to see me so early on a Sunday morning — or ask Wally McDumont to be her messenger boy. I took a deep breath.

"I'm sorry, Mrs. McNeill," I said after a pause. "I've just had a friend call asking me to go to her. There's some kind of emergency."

"Don't mind me, Sandy," Edie answered. "I'm a silly old woman who takes too much pleasure in teasing young men like you. Off you go, and let me know if I can do anything."

I ran down the stairs two at a time, wondering what Edie thought I'd need from a ninety-odd-year-old woman. But I was touched that she'd offered.

When I got outside, I realized that I'd forgotten where I'd left the car last night. I stepped out the front door and looked up and down the street. Finally I saw it, parked at a bit of an angle to the curb, a couple of houses farther up and across the street. I ran across and discovered that I'd not locked the car door. I jumped in, turned the starter, and did a three-point turn to get myself pointed in the right direction. I'd take the quickest route over there, I thought to myself. The one I'd been planning on the way home last night. I had a sudden flash of shame as I thought of my detour. Good thing Edie didn't know what I'd been up to "till all hours."

I turned right onto Avenue Road. In my rear-view mirror, I caught a glimpse of a car pulling out at the far end of Edmund — the red Valiant. It had parked facing

Avenue Road, up near Poplar Plains, where it could keep an eye on both my front door and my car. It followed me onto MacPherson, keeping well back, but also not trying to escape my notice. I cursed myself for not recognizing that it was a tail last night — but realizing also that it wouldn't have mattered if I did. They'd been at the McCraes', and ended up at the Rookery, even while letting me go after I'd turned onto Shuter. These guys weren't following me; they were sending me a message.

I turned on to Mount Pleasant, trying to think who they might be. I couldn't think of anybody I was working with — or against — who would have the manpower or interest to put a tail on me. Or even a reason. The light at Mount Pleasant and Elm was red, and I pulled to a stop. The intersection where we'd both turned left last night to head downtown. The Valiant pulled right up behind me.

The driver was the small Mediterranean man I'd seen arguing with Ida through the kitchen door last night. He waved at me in my rear-view mirror. When the light turned green, I turned left onto Elm. In my mirror, I saw him continue south. Like last night, it was apparently enough just to see where I was going. This morning, he turned off once he knew I was going to Fitz's. And so last night — I blushed again — he also turned away once he knew where I was going.

Whoring.

Chapter 31

I'd expected to pull right up in front of Fitz's place. But the street outside Orangefield was, if anything, even busier than it had been yesterday evening. I ended up parking even farther back, a little west of the intersection with South Drive.

A couple of the new yellow police scout cars were double-parked on the road right in front of Fitz's house. In the driveway, an ambulance stood waiting, its engine running. Uniformed constables and plainclothes men stood beside it, talking and smoking. The medical examiner's official car stood in front of the ambulance. Whatever was going on, it was big.

I ran up the driveway. One of the plainclothes men turned from his conversation to intercept me.

"Wally McDumont asked me to come by," I said by way of explanation. "Douglas Sanderson."

"Let's go in together," the plainclothesman answered. "Inspector McDumont's inside. I'll make sure you're in the right place."

Instead of turning left to the front door as I did last night, we continued straight up the driveway, under the covered part of the driveway, to the side door used for more informal entry and exit. A uniformed constable was standing guard, opening and closing the door as the suits came in and out.

The plainclothes man addressed the sentry.

"Mr.... ahh. Mr. — " He looked at me.

"Sanderson," I filled in. "Douglas Sanderson, here for Wally McDumont."

"Yes. Mr. Sanderson for Inspector McDumont," the plainclothes man repeated, making it official.

"He's in the office, sir," the constable answered. "Through the kitchen, turn right. It'll be right in front of you."

"I've been there before," I said.

"Let me come with you, anyway," the plainclothes man said. "Just to make sure the inspector knows you're here."

"Sandy!" A woman's voice, calling me from the street. I looked back down the driveway. Marty was standing on the sidewalk, carefully staying on city property, waving at me. She was in what looked like a group of reporters. A couple of constables were standing in front of them, making sure nobody approached the house.

"Sandy!"

"If you'd come this way, Mr...." the plainclothes man insisted, directing my attention back to him.

"Sanderson," I reminded him. A cop should have a better memory.

"Mr. Sanderson," he continued. "We've asked the press to keep back."

"What's going on?"

"I'll let Inspector McDumont fill you in. If he called you, he must have something for you to do."

"Actually, it was Greta."

“Greta?”

“Greta McCrae,” I answered. “Mr. McCrae’s wife. She asked Wally to call for me.”

“Ah yes. Well, ‘Wally’ will no doubt take you to her then,” he said, mimicking my use of McDumont’s first name. “This way.”

I waved back to Marty and mouthed “later” at her. The plainclothes man guided me through before I could see whether she understood.

Once we were inside, I saw Ida and Alice sitting on stools in front of the refrigerator. Alice was hunched over, wiping her eyes. Ida was sitting straight up, very pale. A police woman was sitting on a stool beside them, her head bent in low, close to Alice’s. The plainclothes man and I gave them room by walking around the other side of a large preparation table that stood in the middle of the kitchen. We continued out into the servants’ hall, where Greta had held me back less than twelve hours ago. I turned automatically to the right, toward Fitz’s office. The door was slightly ajar. Behind it I could see shadows moving. At least one person was pacing back and forth.

The plainclothes man took a jog-step to get ahead of me before we reached the office door. He rapped lightly on the door frame.

“Inspector McDumont?” he asked. “A Mr. — ”

“Sanderson,” I filled in before he could hesitate again. He turned to look at me, annoyed.

“A Mr. San-der-son, apparently,” he said, stretching out the syllables. “He says you asked him to come.”

Wally had come to the door by this point, and he pulled it open.

"Aye, though it's no for my benefit, Bob," he answered. "The victim's wife asked me to call him. He's an employee of Mr. McCrae's law firm."

We both answered at the same time, over top each other.

"Actually, I'm not — "

"Do you want me to take — "

We stopped and looked at each other. I made an "after you" gesture with my hand.

"Do you want me to take him to see Mrs. McCrae, then, instead, Inspector?" the plainclothes man asked.

"Nah," Wally answered. "I can take him or send him with a constable in a minute. Let me have a chat with him first in here."

Wally stepped back, pulling the door with him to let me in. Behind him, the room was dark. The blinds were drawn and only one of the floor lamps was on. A second plainclothes man was on his hands and knees to the left of Fitz's desk, holding a flashlight almost horizontal to the ground. Searching for something. Wally placed a hand on my shoulder and directed me forward, toward the chair I'd been sitting in last night. I took a step past him, and got a better look into the room. I stopped.

Fitz was sitting in his chair, behind his desk. Though maybe *sitting* isn't the right word. He was slumped over, head on the desk, turned sideways at an odd angle. His eyes were open, staring to the right of his desk at a spot on the wall somewhere above the kneeling plainclothes man's back.

He was dead.

Wally moved me gently forward, and I took another step, still looking at Fitz. Holding me by my shoulders, Wally then steered me backward until I was standing in front of the chair. He applied some downward pressure, causing me to sit down. I was still looking at Fitz. Wally pulled out the other chair and turned it to face me. He sat down.

I examined the desktop. There was blood on it. On the right side of his neck, the side that was uppermost, I could see an angry, deep, red cut. The skin around it was covered in dried blood.

"Aye," Wally said softly. "'Tis a' awesome sight."

I turned to look at him.

"What happened?" I asked.

"We don't rightly know," he answered. "Except, of course, that Mr. McCrae is deceased, and it wasna a heart attack."

"It looks like somebody cut his throat," I said.

"Not exactly," Wally answered. "Garrote."

I continued to stare at the wound, horrified.

"We don't have the murder weapon, mind," he continued. "But I'd be very surprised if it didna turn out ta be a cheese cutter."

"A' awful way to go," he added. "Gruesome."

Suddenly the room was flooded with light. The plainclothes man who'd been searching the floor had stood up and gone back to the light switches. He turned on the rest of the floor lamps, and then flipped the switch for the overhead light. He walked over to the French doors behind Fitz and opened the curtains. Cold indirect

sunlight from the winter sun came through the north-facing doors and windows. I'd never seen the room so bright.

"There's nothing more I can see, Inspector," the plainclothes man said. "No mud, grass, dirt, cigarette ashes. Nothing really to say anybody other than the victim was in the room at all last night."

"But you were here the night, were ye no, Mr. Sanderson?" Wally asked, turning toward me. He opened his police notebook, which had been lying on the desk beside him. "Mrs. McCrae told us that you were here with the Dutch consul, a Mr. —"

"Van Bergen-Aarts," I filled in.

"Van Bergen-Aarts. Yes. That's right," Wally agreed, looking at his notebook.

"I was."

"Do ye know wha' time?"

"Well, both Greta and Ida should know," I said. "We were here quite a while. An hour maybe. Ninety minutes? Greta came and got us. I think it was about midnight."

"Midnight," Wally repeated, writing my answers in his notebook. "About an hour. You an' a Mr. Van Bergen."

"Van Bergen-Aarts," I answered. "It's a double name."

"Nay surprise, there, me man; nay surprise. And when ye left, did Mr. McCrae come with you, Mr. Sanderson?"

"Of course, Wally. I just said: Greta came to get us. We'd been talking here for quite a while."

Wally made some more notes in his notebook.

"And Van Bergen?" he asked. "I mean, *Mister Van Bergen-Aarts*, if you please."

"He left first, I believe," I said. "Right after Greta."

There was a brief pause while he wrote this down in his notebook.

"That's fine the noo, Mr. Sanderson," he said. "As an ex-policeman like yourself knows, we need to keep checking the answers we get. Just to make sure we're not missing something."

"No offence intended, of course, sir." There was a slight edge of hostility in his voice. After a few minutes of care — even kindness, you might say — it appeared that Wally had decided to return to his more customary insolence.

"None taken, Wally. Where's Greta?"

"She's upstairs, in the library," Wally said. Turning to the plainclothes man: "Bob, could you fetch a constable to take Mr. Sanderson up to Mrs. McCrae in the library?"

The second plainclothes man stepped halfway through the door. "Constable Spector," he said. "Could you come here for a moment?"

He stepped back, followed by a very tall uniformed police officer. Negro. He looked like he was in his forties. He was broad-shouldered, fit, and had a wide, serious, but gentle face.

"Robert," Wally said when Constable Spector entered the room. "Could you take Mr. Sanderson here up to Mrs. McCrae?" Wally said. "Mind that he doesn't go wandering around the house. And check whether Kathleen or Mrs. McCrae need anything."

"Yes, sir," Spector answered. "Right away, sir."

He sounded Jamaican. Or maybe Barbadian.

"Come this way, please, Mr. Sanderson."

I followed Spector out the office door and along the corridor past the kitchen. I could see Ida's head above the table. Alice and the police woman were presumably still hunched over. The constable and I went up the service staircase, retracing the route Greta, Fitz, Van Bergen-Aarts, and I had taken the night before. At the top of the landing, we stopped, standing outside the library door.

"One moment, sir," Spector said. "Wait here, please."

He stepped forward and knocked on the door.

"Yes?" came a woman's voice from inside. Not Greta's. "Come in."

Spector opened the door widely and stepped in in front of me.

Greta was sitting on a couch. Beside her was another police woman and Freddie Cooper. Freddie and Greta were crying. Spector cleared his throat.

"Forgive me, ma'am," he began. "Inspector McDumont has asked me to bring Mr. Sanderson upstairs to see Mrs. McCrae."

"Yes," answered the police woman. This was Kathleen, I supposed. She had a broad, round, and very pale face. Freckles. "Bring him in."

"Greta!" I called out. She looked up.

"Oh, Sendie," she said, her voice trembling. "Have you heard what has happened?"

"Wally just filled me in," I answered. I didn't say that I'd seen it as well.

Freddie put her one hand on Greta's shoulder and motioned to me with the other

to come to the couch. Kathleen stood up to give me some space. She gestured to the place where she'd been sitting.

"Please, Mr. Sanderson," she said. "I need to stretch my legs anyway."

I took her place and wrapped an arm round Greta's shoulder. Kathleen walked over to one of the bookshelves, where she developed what turned out to be an apparently overwhelming interest in travel books.

"What happened?" I asked Greta and Freddie. "How? When? Who?"

Chapter 32

“We do not know what happened, Zandie,” Freddie began. “I go to bed soon after you leave and Greta stays with me for a while to talk. Later she goes to bed also. She wakes up at around 5 this morning, and notices that Fitz does not come to bed at all. So she goes to look for him and finds him dead in his office. She comes to me immediately and we both go to look before Greta calls the police.”

“Nobody heard anything?” I asked. “Nobody saw anything?”

“I do not think so. After we call the police, Greta and I go to find Ida and Alice. They are sleeping also. We wake them up and say what has happened. But then the police are here.”

“They got in through the backyard, Sendie,” Greta said, looking up at me. “When I came into the office, one of the French doors was open.”

“Has anybody searched the backyard?” I asked.

“I looked when I closed the doors, just before I went for Freddie,” Greta answered. “But I saw nothing. Wally asked us to come up here soon after he arrived, so we have not seen what they have been doing. But surely they have had men out there?”

“They were searching the office floor when they brought me in,” I told them. “The curtains were closed at that point and they were on their hands and knees looking with a flashlight.”

“I am sure they will do a proper job,” Freddie said, to Greta more than me. “We

must stay away.”

At that moment there was an uproar in the hallway outside. Kathleen broke off her examination of the bookshelf and turned toward us.

“Stay here,” she said. “I’ll look outside and see what’s going on.”

The noise was getting closer and beginning to take shape. Van Bergen-Aarts. He was yelling at somebody at what sounded like the front stairs, up from the main door.

“I am on a consular visit!” he shouted. “Mrs. McCrae is a citizen of Nederland and I am the Nederlands consul general. It is an international incident to prevent me from seeing a Dutch citizen who is in trouble!”

Kathleen had opened the door to the library. Van Bergen-Aarts was standing on the landing, looking in. He was trying to push his way around Constable Spector, who was preventing him, calmly but firmly, from entering.

“I am sure that we can arrange something, sir,” I heard Spector saying in his soft voice. “If you will just be patient for a minute or two. My orders are to prevent anybody from coming through, sir. But I have sent for my inspector. He will be here any moment, I am sure.”

“Your inspector has nothing to say in the matter, Constable!” Van Bergen-Aarts replied. “I have functional immunity under the Vienna Convention in the exercise of my consular duties! You must not interfere with me in any way!”

“I thank you for that clarification, sir,” Spector answered calmly, his accent drawing out the word *clarification*. He was still standing between Van Bergen-Aarts and the door. “The inspector will be here any moment, I am sure.”

Van Bergen-Aarts saw me over Spector and Kathleen's shoulders.

"Sanderson!" he yelled, calling out to me. "Please explain to this ape that I simply must be allowed to have access to my country's citizens!"

Spector didn't move a muscle.

"I'll thank ye te keep a civil tongue in ye head, me man!" a third voice boomed in the hallway, unseen. Wally. "We'll straighten it all out soon enough — assuming none of us gets arrested in the meantime for disturbing the peace or assaulting a peace officer."

"This is Mr. Van Bergen-Aarts, sir," Spector said, addressing Wally. "He says that he is the consul general and that he would like to speak to Mrs. McCrae and Mrs. Cooper, sir."

"I don't say that I am the Dutch consul, you monk— " Van Bergen-Aarts started to yell. Wally took a threatening step toward him, cutting off the insult. Van Bergen-Aarts decided to try it again.

"I don't say that I am the Dutch consul, Constable," he said, more calmly this time. "I *am* the Dutch consul, and I have a legal right to speak to citizens of my country when they are in trouble."

"Tha's much better, sir," Wally replied. "You'll find we can sort things out far the quicker when you behave yourself."

"Mr. Van Bergen-Aarts presented himself at the front door, Inspector McDumont, sir," Constable Spector continued in the same calm voice. "He said that he wanted to speak to Mrs. McCrae and Mrs. Cooper and then pushed through when I said that I would need to check with you, sir."

“Aye. Well, thank ye, Constable. I think you can go back downstairs to your post,” Wally answered. “Mr. Van Bergen-Aarts seems to be a wee bit calmer the noo so I think we can take it from here.”

He looked into the library.

“And I see I have Kathleen for muscle, should things get out of hand!”

Spector snapped his feet together and saluted. He stepped around Van Bergen-Aarts and headed down the front stairs. Kathleen moved into the door frame, blocking Van Bergen-Aarts from entering the library.

“I think we can probably let Mr. Van Bergen-Aarts in, Constable Healey,” Wally said. “We’re all a bit calmer and I understand he has some official duties to attend to.”

He turned to Van Bergen-Aarts.

“I’d appreciate seeing you below, Mr. Van Bergen-Aarts, before you leave. Kathleen, could you arrange for someone to bring him to me after he has comforted Mrs. McCrae?”

I could see Mr. Van Bergen-Aarts bite his tongue. He’d clearly decided, when it came to Wally, that it might be better not to stand on his rights.

“Of course, sir,” Kathleen answered. She turned sideways, freeing a path for Van Bergen-Aarts.

He was dressed, once again, magnificently. He was wearing what looked like Scottish trews, in an orangish-red tartan, with a white shirt, a matching tartan bow tie, black silk waistcoat and suit jacket, all under what looked like a felt cape. He held a large, wide-brimmed hat in his hand. It was an astoundingly eccentric outfit,

but one that, once again, he pulled off effortlessly. Despite the solemnity of the moment, I found myself wondering how he managed it at — I looked at my watch — eight-thirty on a Sunday morning.

He walked toward us, with his arms open.

“Popje,” he said, addressing Greta and Freddie in Dutch. “Wat is er hier nu gebeurt?” He looked over to me. “I hope you’ll forgive me for speaking to your friend in Dutch, Mr. Sanderson. At emotional times, it is so much easier to express yourself in your mother tongue, do you not agree?”

I had stood up by this point and, like Kathleen before me, stepped back to offer my place to the newcomer. He nodded in thanks and sat down beside her, turning immediately to the two women.

I watched them as Greta and Freddie explained the story to Van Bergen-Aarts. I didn’t have enough Dutch to understand the conversation in detail, but since I’d just had it in English, it was easy enough to follow the outlines.

“Why, this is terrible,” he said in English when they had finished. “Mr. Sanderson,” he continued, turning to me. “You have been a *politie agent*” — he was having a hard time switching languages — “What do you think of this? Could it have been a robber? Or something to do with his work?”

“I don’t have any insight, I’m afraid, Mr. Van Bergen-Aarts,” I said. “It’s been a long time since I was a cop. Inspector McDumont is a good man. I’m sure he and his men are doing everything they can.”

“Yes, of course,” he replied. “Please, call me Dirk. This is no time to stand on formalities.”

"Of course, Dirk," I said. For some reason we'd stayed much more formal last night, despite Greta's introduction.

"Thank you for being here for my friend, Sandy," he said, making sure to use my name in return. "I was delayed in coming."

"How did you know, Mr. Van Bergen-Aarts, to come in the first place?" Wally had come back upstairs, and his voice boomed as he walked into the room.

"I hope you'll forgive me," he said. "The ME is busy downstairs the noo, so I thought I'd come and find ye meself."

Greta sniffled again at the mention of the medical examiner. I wondered how Wally, who'd generally handled things here much more sensitively than I thought was possible for him, could think going into the details was a good idea.

"I wonder, Mr. Sanderson," Wally said, turning his attention to me, "whether you and Mrs. Cooper here wouldna mind helping Mrs. McCrae te her bedroom."

"I'd like a wee word with Mr. Van Bergen-Aarts," he continued, "and I have the feeling that Mrs. McCrae could use a lie-down."

Freddie stood up, holding Greta's hand.

"Yes, of course, Inspector McDumont," she said, before inviting Greta to come with her to the bedroom in her heavily German-accented Dutch. "Zullen wij naar je slaapkamer gaan, schatje?"

"Of course," Greta answered in English. "Sendie, will you come with us?" She reached out to take my hand. "Good morning, Inspector McDumont. Please call me if you need anything."

Freddie and I walked with Greta out the library door, each holding a hand.

Kathleen placed a hand over Greta's as we passed her. "It's the right thing, dear," she said. "Take care of yourself. I'll make sure I come and get you if you are needed for anything."

Chapter 33

Freddie and I walked with Greta back into the private area of the house. When we reached the stairs, we could no longer walk three abreast, so I dropped Greta's hand and let the two of them go ahead of me. I watched their backs as we made our way up. Even at a moment like this, I thought, despite myself, these are two fine-looking women.

We got to the bedroom door, and Greta turned toward me. She was pale and her eyes were a little puffed, but she'd stopped crying. She dropped Freddie's hand and reached up to my shoulders.

"Thank you so much for coming, Sendie," she said. "It was good to have a friendly man in the house."

She kissed my cheeks.

"I think we will be okay for now."

"Ja, thank you, Zendie," Freddie agreed, also reaching up for a farewell kiss. "I think Greta and I rest now. We haf been up since half-five and it is very emotional. We call you again if we need you."

I said I could let myself out, and left them by the bedroom door. I went down the front stairs, to the front door, where Ida had kissed me less than twelve hours before. I opened the door and was greeted by Constable Spector, who was standing guard just outside.

"Good morning, sir," he said. "I'm sorry we have had to meet on such a sad

occasion.”

“It’s the nature of police work, Constable Spector,” I answered. “It’s always the worst day of somebody’s life.”

“That’s true, sir,” he said. “But still we can wish for better times.”

He asked whether I was finished on the property or would need to return. I told him I might be back if Mrs. McCrae called but that I was done for the next several hours at least — unless of course Inspector McDumont or any of the other investigators should need me.

“Do they know how to find you, sir?” Spector asked.

“Wally and I go back to the war, Spector,” I said. “He has my telephone number if he needs me.”

“I’ll be sure to tell him, sir,” the constable answered. “Drive carefully.”

I walked down the driveway, looking for Marty, but the press, like the ambulance and the ME van, were gone by this point. Which I guess is why we call it ambulance chasing. One of the scout cars remained, and a few unmarked cars. It looked like the police were wrapping up. I headed up the street and started my car, heading home. When I got to Elm I found a spot on the north side, directly across from the front door to the Rookery. I got out, checked that the door was locked, and headed across the street.

Chapter 34

Having learned my lesson this morning, I looked up and down the street as I crossed over to my building to see if the tail was back. And it was, in almost exactly the same spot: south side of Elm, far west end of the street, looking east towards me. Perfectly positioned to see everybody coming or going.

I decided that anyone this intent on sending me a message deserves an answer. So instead of continuing into my building, I turned right, walking purposefully towards the Valiant. I didn't have a gun, but I didn't think I'd need one. If my tail had wanted to kill me, he'd have done it by now. This was about something else.

There were two men in the car. The one who'd been following me last night and this morning behind the wheel and a second, much younger, man sitting in the front passenger seat. As I approached, the old man opened the driver-side door and stepped out, turning to me and resting his elbows on the roof. The younger man rolled down his window and put his right arm out, trucker style: elbow on the door and hand grabbing the roof. It was subtle but unmistakable. They were keeping the temperature down, showing me their hands.

"Mr. Sanderson," the older man said. "How ya doing?" He had a heavy Italian-Canadian accent. He was dressed more or less as he had been last night. Short and wide silk pattern tie, dingy white shirt, heavy tweed sport coat. He did not have his hat on, and I could see his black, thinning hair. High hairline.

"You have me at a disadvantage, Mr...?"

"Bondi," he answered. "Giacomo Bondi."

The younger man sniggered. I decided to let it pass.

"Well, Mr. Bondi," I said, "I'm interested in what you are doing following me around."

"It's my boss, Mr. Kugelman," he answered. "He'd like your opinion on something."

"He's never heard of weekdays?" I asked. "I work downtown, in the Temple Building. He can drop by any time."

"Mr. Kugelman, he's a busy man," Bondi answered. "And you know these Jews: Sunday's like Monday to them. He asked us to come and get you. Today."

"You've been following me around for the past twenty-four hours," I said. "Why didn't you say something earlier?"

"The Sabbath," Bondi said. "Mr. Kugelman's a very religious guy. Nothing on Saturday. Friday evening to Saturday evening, he don't do nothing."

"So why the tail?"

"Mr. Kugelman asked me to be sure about you," Bondi said. "He said he wanted to know you were a good guy."

"And you find that out by following me around?" I asked.

"Yes," Bondi said simply. "By following you around and asking people. Mrs. Barone, she says you are a good man. We can trust you."

"Well, now that you know I'm a good man, why don't you tell Mr. Kugelman to call my office on Monday morning. My secretary can make us an appointment, and he can have my opinion on anything he likes. Sundays are like Sundays to me."

“Yeah, but Mr. Kugelman wants to see you now.”

“Listen,” I said, “it’s after lunch and I’ve been up since seven after staying out all last night. I need to get some sleep.”

“I bet you do,” said Mr. Bondi. “Late nights and early mornings. You’re not getting any younger.” He made a thrusting motion with his hips. I felt my cheeks redden.

“What I do is my own business, day or night. Tell Mr. Kugelman he can call me — or not — on Monday.”

“Mr. Kugelman told me you are a busy man, Mr. Sanderson,” Bondi answered. “He said that I should stay nice but also insistent-like. ‘No rough stuff, Jim,’ he says to me. ‘Mr. Sanderson can handle himself in a fight. You gotta treat him wi’ respect,’ he says to me. ‘But you also gotta bring him to me.’”

“We got two large for you, Mr. Sanderson, if you’ll come with us right now,” the younger one said. “You can take your own car.”

“Where to, Mr...?”

“To The Bagel,” the younger one answered, ignoring my hint for a name. “You know it? Just along College, at Spadina.”

Two grand is a lot of money for a Sunday meeting, even for a Bay Street PI. But it was the idea that I could bring my own car that made the sale. These guys had been careful about how they handled themselves. Tough but not threatening. Other than the dig about where they’d left me last night, they’d handled themselves pretty well for a couple of roughs. And maybe they didn’t think heading downtown for some T&A was a bad way of spending a Saturday night.

But also, I knew who Kugelman was. You couldn't not know who he was if you followed the crime sheets. He ran a "Jewellery Store" at College and Spadina that was the biggest fence and loan shark operation in town. Between New York and Las Vegas, I'd even heard. If you had something to sell, Kugelman was the one to sell it to. I'd never met him, and this seemed about as safe a way as any to do it.

"All right," I said after a moment. "For two grand and in my own car. Money upfront. If Mr. Kugelman wants to pay that much for an out-of-hours appointment, who am I to say no?"

The younger man opened his door and stood up beside me. He was wearing almost the same outfit as Bondi, except in a slimmer cut and with a nicer shirt and tie.

"I got one grand here, and Mr. Kugelman said to tell you he's got the other grand in The Bagel."

He looked me in the eye. I nodded agreement.

"I'm gonna get it out for you now," he said. "From my wallet." He pointed demonstratively with his right hand toward his heart, still watching me. Gripping the hem of his jacket with his left hand, he swung it out and around, opening it up and showing the lining to me. Under his arm, I could see the butt end of what looked like a 1911 semi-automatic tucked into a shoulder holster.

"I'm going to reach up an' get my wallet," he said.

Keeping his eyes on me, he raised his right hand slowly, awkwardly, keeping the palm down and thumb toward the holster. When his fingertips touched the lining of his jacket, he reached in with his fingertips and pulled out a well-worn black leather

billfold. He let his jacket go and then used both hands to pull the wallet open. It contained a wad of bills, a half-inch thick. He quickly counted out ten with his left thumb, and then pulled them out and folded them with a single movement with his right, handing them over to me. A practised move. He kept the wallet in his left hand while I took the money from him.

“One more thing,” I said. “Since I see you're armed, I'm going to bring a pistol as well. If everybody's carrying, I'm sure we'll all feel safer.”

“You gotta do what you gotta do, Mr. Sanderson,” Bondi said. “All Mr. Kugelman wants is to have a chat. If it makes you feel safer knowing we all got guns, then I'm sure that's all right too.”

I told him I'd be out in a minute.

“Take your time, Mr. Sanderson,” the younger one said, smiling. “We know where you live.”

Chapter 35

By the time I got back down the stairs, Bondi and his partner had driven up to the front door of my building. They were double-parked with the window down when I came out the door.

“The Bagel, at Spadina and College,” the younger one reminded me. “We’ll wait for you at the corner, but you know where to go.”

I got in the Lincoln, did a three-point turn, and followed the Valiant as it turned south onto Avenue Road.

Traffic was light, so I was able to stay with them all the way down to College. I had to stop for a streetcar at Spadina, which let them get a little ahead. By the time I got to the corner, they had parked and were standing on the street outside the restaurant. I drove past them, made a U-turn, and took the first parking spot I could see, a couple of doors up. I walked down to join them. As I approached, the younger man turned and opened the door for us. He waved me through.

The Bagel is a Jewish breakfast-and-lunch joint. It’s between a Ukrainian barbershop and a Hungarian laundry in the Alexandrina Block, a commercial block and apartment building that must have been fancy when it was built in the 1880s. Arched windows along the second floor and a gable announcing its date to the world. Now, it’s a bit more downmarket: bachelor apartments and ethnic stores that keep going out of business.

The Bagel, however, has been a mainstay since it opened in the late 1950s. Its

owners are Benny Popov and his wife, Judith, a couple of Jews who came down from Montreal just after the war and now live out in Scarborough. It's famous for three things: its bagels, especially with lox and cream cheese; its waitresses, who are always angry at Benny and not afraid to say so; and its clientele: wholesalers, job-lotters, and hatters from the Jewish businesses that run down Spadina — and the mobsters, Jewish and Italian, who use it as a kind of business club. I often come down here on a Sunday if I'm in the mood for a brunch.

I walked in the front door between Bondi and his younger partner. Benny was standing behind the bar, chatting with one of his customers. Business was starting to wind up. Anna Gawinski — who everybody called “Polish Anna” to distinguish her from Anna Nagy, or “The Hungarian,” — was returning from the back. She'd been refilling coffee cups and had a carafe in her hand.

“Kitchen's closed,” she said in a typical Bagel greeting. “Come back tomorrow.”

“Anna!” Benny called out from across the bar. And then to us: “Pay no attention to her. We stay open til three. Grab a seat.”

“Well, then I guess you're gonna be serving it, Benny,” Polish Anna said. “‘Cause like I told you this morning, I'm outta here in fifteen minutes.” It was quarter to one. “My sister's visiting from Montreal with her husband and two kids.”

“I don't know why you go telling them you can go home at one when we're open to three!” Benny answered. “They got no jobs in Poland, or something? You never heard of a punch clock back in the Old Country?”

“I told you last week she was coming!” Anna yelled back. “You gotta problem with that? You know what you can do!”

We left Polish Anna and Benny to their argument and headed toward the back of the room. A short fat man stood up as we approached, waving at us.

"Mr. Sanderson! Joe! Jim! How good to see you!"

He was dressed like a used car salesman playing a round of golf: bright-green checkered pants, bright-yellow shirt, tie in a slightly different green than his pants, and a plaid sport coat in yet another green, with a yellow check. A grey-and-black-patterned cloth fedora lay on the table in front of him.

"I'm Ruben Kugelman. You can call me Roy." He also sounded like a used car salesman.

He was in the middle of the booth, and he signalled to the other men to get up. "Frankie," he said, "Moe. Get up. I want you to meet Mr. Sanderson. He's a friend of Mr. McCrae."

Another short fat man to Kugelman's left stood up. He was dressed more or less like Bondi: grey pants, brown woollen tie, thin, almost see-through, polyester shirt, over a white undervest. A fedora with a wide band sat in front of him. He had a cigar in his mouth.

"Good to see ya, Mr. Sanderson," he grunted. "Frankie Montana."

The other man, to Kugelman's right, also stood up. He was tall and thin, and almost completely bald. Maybe in his fifties. Dressed like Frankie, except much better quality. Woollen suit, with a thick white cotton shirt. A thin dark-brown tie with a faint-yellow stripe in it. Reading glasses on a chain around his neck. Scholarly-looking.

"Mr. Sanderson," he said. "Moris Weinstein. It's nice to meet you."

Bondi pulled out a chair for me and I sat down, across from Kugelman, who looked up towards the counter.

"You want something to eat?" he asked. "A coffee? A bagel?"

Without waiting for me to answer, he raised his arm and snapped his finger.

"Hey! Anna!" he called out. "Hey! Polack!" And then, without waiting for her to acknowledge him: "Three more coffees here. And bring a menu."

Polish Anna was behind the counter at this point. She sighed loud enough for us to hear it.

"What I love about this place," Kugelman said. "The customer is always right."

He sat down again.

"I appreciate you taking the time to come see me, Mr. Sanderson," he began. "I've been meaning to talk with you for a while."

"I noticed," I said. "You know that I talk to anybody at my office, right? Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free estimates."

"It was more convenient this way," he answered. "I hope Joe told you I was willing to pay."

"He paid me half when they picked me up. And he said that you have the other half here," I said. "Which I am."

"Moe here will make sure you get what's yours," Kugelman said, motioning to Weinstein to hand over the cash.

Polish Anna arrived with the coffee. She turned over the cup in front of me with a clatter.

"Did you want anything to eat, Mr. Sanderson?" Kugelman asked.

"Not for me," I answered. "Like Anna, I gotta get home pretty soon."

"Not like anybody listens to what I gotta do," Anna added to no one in particular.

"You'll be all right, honey," he said. "Just run up the bill before you go and leave it with Benny. I'll make sure you get a good tip."

"As if that Jew will ever pass it on to me," she answered grumpily.

Kugelman opened his wallet and pulled out a five and a two.

"Listen, why don't I just give this to you and you keep the change," he said.

"Seven bucks oughta be enough for the bill and a nice tip, right? Even for a Jew?"

"I guess," Anna said grudgingly. She preferred to be disappointed.

Kugelman smiled as Polish Anna turned and walked back to the bar.

"Nice ass on that one," Kugelman said. "Mouth like a steam train, but an ass like a feather bed."

The group fell silent, contemplating Polish Anna's bum. Weinstein had been counting out the cash while his boss was speaking. He handed it over to me, breaking the silence.

"I think you'll find it all there, Mr. Sanderson," he said. This was a much thicker wad: hundreds, fifties, and twenties. I took out my wallet and put the money away. I didn't count it. It felt like it was about the right amount. But I also knew that there was no advantage to be had by shorting somebody on a retainer.

"All right," I said, turning back to the table. "What was it that couldn't wait till my office opened?"

"Well, let me begin by saying how sorry I am to hear about Mr. McCrae," Kugelman said. "Him and me? We go way back."

He saw the look of surprise on my face.

"He's been 'helping me with my inquiries,' as I think the Brits would say," he explained, putting on an English accent for the last bit. "But we also had some friends in common, from before."

"That's what their cops say," I explained. "'Helping with their inquiries'. It's a polite way of saying they've taken you in for questioning."

Kugelman shrugged, smiling.

"But that's not what I was wondering about," I continued. "What I really want to know is how you found out about McCrae."

"It's been all over the radio," Kugelman said. "'Death in Rosedale, cops at hundred Elm.' They haven't said what happened yet, but you don't need Einstein to figure it out."

"I don't think they know what's happened yet," I said, shading the truth a little. There wasn't really any doubt *what* had happened, it was more a question of who and why.

"Heart attack?" he asked. "Late-night parties? Too much booze?" He hitched up his pants and patted his stomach. "We're at the age when it starts to add up."

"I can't really say," I answered. "I was with his wife for most of the time."

"Of course," he said. "Poor woman. Hilda, or Stella, or something like that? Deitsch froy, I think, right?"

Kugelman looked at me and saw my incomprehension.

"German. She's German, right?"

"Dutch. And the name is Greta."

"That's right. Greta. Fine-looking woman. Funny I thought she was German."

We sat and looked at each other. He stirred his coffee.

"You're paying to see me," I said after a moment.

"Yes, that's right," he said. "Let's talk about that."

There was a commotion at the front of the restaurant as Polish Anna tried to turn away another customer. "All right! All right!" I heard Benny yell. "Just take the afternoon off already. I can't afford to have you stay here all afternoon turning my customers away! I earn more when you don't work!"

"You see, the thing is, Mr. Sanderson," Kugelman continued. "I wanted to see if Mr. McCrae had told you anything about our business together. What he was doing for me. And, now that he's passed away, whether maybe you were the right guy to take his place."

"Well, that depends on what he was doing for you," I said. "I'm an investigator, not a lawyer."

"Yes, well, it's probably nothing anyway," he answered. "Why don't I tell you the rest and we see where we end up. Sound good?"

He turned his head to look at Frankie and then Weinstein. I sat waiting.

"All right," he began again. "You see, the thing is, your friend cost me a lot of money once. Did he tell you anything about that?"

I said that he didn't.

"It goes back to the war," he said. "Well, right after it, anyway. Mr. McCrae and some friends of mine over there were business partners. And they'd been making some good money."

“Nothing too serious,” he added. “A couple of cases of this and that every now and then. Helping out the local economy, you know. Tires, oil, gas, food, that kind of thing.”

“Are you trying to tell me that McCrae was a black-marketeer?” I asked incredulously. “Fitzpatrick McCrae? I don’t believe it. I was with him the whole war.”

“Yeah, well, this was a special deal,” Kugelman said. “You see, he owed some friends of mine some favours, and he’d help them out when they needed to find something special. It was never too much, you know. Just enough to help people get a leg up as they started to rebuild.”

“‘Right after the war,’ you said?” I asked. “You mean, when we were in Holland? That can’t be right. We were both in Civil Affairs then, and neither of us had access to supplies.”

“No, I didn’t mean that,” he said. “This was before, in Italy. My business with him was later and it wasn’t about a couple of missing crates of stuff. Before that it was more of a friend-of-a-friend thing. I just helped them get in touch.”

He looked at me closely. “I’m guessing he didn’t say nothing?”

“Not to me,” I said.

“Ah,” Kugelman said. “I’m glad to hear that.”

“It was a pretty good deal,” he went on, reminiscing. “I was never in the Army, so I don’t know exactly how it worked, but they used to say McCrae was like an Eaton’s catalogue. You’d call him up and say ‘We need three o’ such-and-such and four o’ summ’in’ else,’ and a couple of days later your order was waiting to be picked up.”

"That doesn't make any sense," I answered. "Fitz wasn't the quartermaster. He wouldn't handle the supplies. And anyhow, why would he risk everything like that? He didn't need the money and the reputation — "

"Yeah, well, I guess life's full of surprises, huh?" Kugelman jumped in. "Maybe he didn't have as much as you thought he did, or maybe he liked the thrill. It can be a lotta fun, a life of crime, you know. Girls, fast cars, hide-and-seek with the cops. I bet it's no different jus' 'cause you're in the Army."

The others were looking at me, grinning. A life of crime was the life for them too, apparently. I hadn't realized that being a hoodlum was a vocation. Like singing in the opera or joining the priesthood. Except with guns and girls.

Kugelman saying that Fitz had been a black-marketeer shook me a little. I'd really never seen any sign of it. No flash. No unexplained absences. Just a regular — well, better than regular — company O/C: managing the men, controlling the paperwork, making sure everybody had what they needed when they needed it.

And then it hit me. Actually, that'd be the perfect place to run a black-market scam. As O/C HQ Coy, Fitz wasn't the guy who picked up the supplies, of course. But everything came through him. He ordered everything we needed — including extras to cover what we called "pilferage" as goods made their way through the supply chain — and no one ever questioned why a fighting unit needed things. Stuff tends to get used up when somebody's shooting at you. It'd be easy enough for him to run his own game, ordering up extra and then "losing" it himself. And the reputation hit? Well, like I said: Ike had to dismiss some of his own staff for doing the same thing not long after D-Day. I didn't believe it, but I could see that it wasn't

impossible — if he'd needed the money, or didn't care about his reputation.

But Fitz didn't need money and he did care about his reputation. What Kugelman was telling me didn't match the Fitz I knew.

"I don't believe you," I said finally. "I just don't believe you. We were best friends and there's just no reason why he'd ever want to risk getting involved in this. We arrested soldiers — especially officers — who did that. People looked down on it."

"Yeah, well, let's just say that that's kind of how we like to do things in this line of work," Kugelman said. "It's the guys you don't suspect who are the best at it. All you gotta do is find a reason why they gotta do it for you," Kugelman added, before pausing for a moment.

"Maybe they did something they don't want Mom or Dad to know. Or the wife. Or maybe they help out a friend just this once and then they can't go back. Or maybe, like I said, they just like the lifestyle.

"The point is, somebody here had something that McCrae was willing to trade for over there. I don't even know what it was. But it was bad enough that he turned down a couple of transfers or promotions or summ'in' for it," Kugelman said. "Just so's he could stay in the job. He told me so himself just las' week."

I felt a chill. That would explain something I'd never understood: why Fitz never left his position as O/C.

I told you before that Fitz was in charge of HQ Company the whole time we were in Italy. Actually, it began before that, back when we were in Aldershot, before we landed in Sicily.

But what I didn't tell you was how unusual that was. In a fighting regiment,

people moved around a lot — especially officers. Most of it, frankly, was due to attrition. Second lieutenants, lieutenants, captains, and majors were wounded and killed often, at a far higher ratio than corporals and privates, and so there was plenty of opportunity to move up the ranks as the war went on. Men could go from lance corporal to sergeant, to second lieutenant or lieutenant, or even captain or major in a couple of months if the chips fell right for you. And wrong, of course, for the guy above you.

But the movement wasn't always up. Because there was so much attrition, the Army liked its officers to be generalists, so they could lead any group and be able to fall into any vacancy without having to be retrained. One of the ways they did that was by rotating the junior officers from one company or one job to another, usually with a promotion up the ranks as they go.

Fitz, though, like I said, was different. He got his promotions — he started as a second lieutenant and ended up as a lieutenant colonel — but he didn't move around the way the others did. The whole time we were in Italy, he stayed in place: O/C HQ Coy, the person who approved orders for supplies. He was the only officer in the regiment who wasn't moved even as we fought our way up the boot. It was only when we got to Holland that he was transferred out.

I always thought that that was because he got on so well with the senior officers. But maybe this was the explanation. If you wanted to be a black-marketeer, Fitz's job was probably the best position in the whole regiment. Unlike the quartermaster, who actually handled the loading and unloading of goods, you were responsible for ordering them. And in a fight, nobody blinks if the supplies are running a little high.

A black-marketeer who was allowed to order his own pilferage would be very well set indeed.

“All right,” I said at last. “I still don’t believe you. But let’s say you’re right. So what? What’s that got to do with now? Or with me?”

“Like I said, Mr. Sanderson, I’m glad to hear you didn’t know,” Kugelman answered. “It speaks very highly of you.

“But it’s also not the point in some ways. Mr. McCrae didn’t owe me because of what happened in Italy,” he said. “Mr. McCrae owed me because of what happened after the war. And this was in Holland. When he was with you in the Army government there.”

He looked up.

“Listen,” he said. “Benny’s gonna wanna close here in a bit, and this is something maybe we should discuss in private. I got an office across the road here. You okay coming with us back there? Then I can tell you the business I had with Mr. McCrae and what I was hoping you could do for me.”

Chapter 36

We got up and headed out the door: Bondi and the younger hoodlum walking ahead; Frankie, Weinstein, and Kugelman coming up the rear. The younger man held the door for us once again. Good manners for a tough guy.

“Hey, Benny,” Kugelman yelled as we got to the door. “Thank the Polack for us, will ya? Great staff you got here!”

I was out the door before Benny could reply, so I never heard what he said. Once we were out on the street we continued on, jaywalking across College. When we got to the other side, the younger man ran ahead to get the door. Kugelman touched Bondi on the shoulder.

“Hey, guys,” he said. “I think me and Mr. Sanderson might just go for a walk this way.” He was pointing up the sidewalk. “I could do with the exercise.”

The rest of them stopped and started to turn with us.

“Actually, Frankie, Mo,” he began, speaking in an undertone. “Why don’t you two go up to the office. Take a break. Turn on the radio. Shoot the shit. Have a drink. Whatever you want. Just make sure you keep talking low and you keep the radio on. Got it? I want you talking low and lotsa background noise. I’ll come and get you later.”

He turned to Bondi and the younger hoodlum. “You two. Joey? You wanna go back across the street for me? Just walk across like you’re getting something from your car. But then follow us after a bit on your side of the road. Keep an eye out.

Especially on the cars.

“And Jimmy? Why don’t you give us a minute to get a head start, and then come along behind, on this side. Same thing. Let us know if anybody seems real interested or there’s anything strange in any of the cars.”

We stood waiting while Bondi’s partner ran across the road. Then Kugelman slapped me on the shoulder with an exaggerated gesture and pointed down College.

“Let’s go this way,” he said, as if he had just thought of the idea. “I wanna stretch my legs.”

We started walking down College, away from Spadina. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see Bondi’s younger partner close his car door and start following us.

“Yeah,” he said in a slightly softer voice. “This we gotta be a bit more careful about.”

“Unlike talking about being a hoodlum in a bagel restaurant?” I asked.

“What are they gonna do?” he answered. “Arrest me ’cause I knew some guys who redirected some Army stuff twenty years ago? In another country?”

I looked at him.

“No,” he said. “This is a little different.”

There was a slight pause.

“You see, the thing is,” Kugelman began again. “McCrae interfered with some business that I had going on at the end of the war. And my partners aren’t the kinds of people who forget that kind of thing. Or forgive.”

“What are you talking about?” I asked.

"Well, after the war. He told me you were working with him. In the government or something. Why don't you tell me a little about that."

I started to complain, telling him that he'd called to consult with me. But he cut me off.

"Listen," he said. "Do me a favour and just talk? I'm paying you two grand for a couple of hours of your time. And it turns out I'd like you to tell me about your life. Indulge me."

He had a point, so as we walked I told him the story of my time in Civil Affairs, interviewing members of the underground and so on. Kugelman kept asking me about Fitz, but I had to tell him I didn't know that much.

"What about this shooting?" he asked after a while. "The one I been reading about in the papers. The two guys you executed?"

"Not us. The Seaforths."

"Who are they? I never heard of these Seaforths. I thought it was the Canadians."

I explained how the different regiments worked and then went over the story of the executions with him, explaining that I didn't know much more than what was in the papers, and how it really didn't have much to do with us. "It sounds like there was just some kind of screw-up at the regiment," I said. "It happened all the time in those days."

"Yeah," Kugelman said. "That's what McCrae said. But I really wonder. I think there had to be something else going on. It don't make sense that they'd have pushed as hard as they did to get those guys killed unless there was a reason for

it.

"I've been in this business a long time," he concluded. "That looks like a hit to me."

I told him the story that Van Bergen-Aarts had told me about the transfer of Van der Waals in Achterveld.

We'd made it all the way to Bathurst by this point and he stopped and turned around.

"Now that's what I'm talking about," he said. "I knew there was something more to it. This is very helpful to me, Mr. Sanderson. Your friend hadn't had a chance to tell me about this before he passed away, so I'm grateful."

He asked me a couple more questions about Van Bergen-Aarts, and whether I knew anything more about Van der Waals. I told him that while I'd known about Van der Waals when I was in Holland during the war, his connection to the story of these executions was something I'd discovered only last night.

"This is all very interesting, Mr. Sanderson," Kugelman said as we reached the corner with Spadina once again. "I'm appreciative of your time."

"Did you find out what you needed?" I asked him. "Because I gotta say, I'm not understanding at all what any of this has to do with you. Or what you want from me."

"Well, it's helpful in ways you may not see," he answered. "I can see now that you and your friend weren't working together like I thought you was. So maybe you can't help me as much as I thought. But knowing about this place, Achterberg or whatever, and especially this ambassador friend of yours is real useful to me. I've

got some stuff I need to follow up on, but you've been a big help. Money well spent!"

By this time we were standing outside his office again. He reached out his hand. "Thanks again for coming down to see me on a Sunday afternoon," he said. "I know it was strange, but I hope two grand says you don't feel ripped off. Like I said, you've helped me in ways you may not see yourself, Mr. Sanderson. But you've definitely helped me."

He turned and waved to Bondi, who was still shadowing us on the north side of College. And then across the street to Bondi's partner. The two of them walked up beside us.

"If you don't mind, Mr. Sanderson," Kugelman said, "I'll say goodbye here. You don't need Jimmy or Joey to get you home, I'm guessing. And I got something else for them to do upstairs."

He shook my hand again and turned to the office door. Bondi's younger partner sprinted round me and grabbed the door again, opening it for Kugelman. I waited for a gap in traffic and ran across to my car. Once again, I seemed to have helped somebody out without really realizing it. A new approach to being a private eye, I guess. Confusing. But lucrative.

Chapter 37

The next couple of weeks were a disaster. The Medical Examiner was refusing to say when they'd release Fitz's body, which meant that Greta couldn't set a date for his funeral — but also that she didn't know if she should substitute a memorial service instead. Tini moved back to the house to help her mother out, and Freddie, who'd originally planned to return to Amsterdam at the end of January, postponed her flight until the end of February. But none of it could change the fact that Fitz was dead and that his death had been gruesome.

My talk with Kugelman left me even more concerned. I still found it hard to believe that Fitz had been involved in the black market during the war, but even if Kugelman was wrong, it didn't mean that Fitz wasn't dead as a result — and that we might be looking at even more trouble in the days ahead. People don't kill with a garrote in the heat of the moment. Whoever had attacked Fitz was still out there, and Kugelman's description of his partners — the ones he said Fitz had double crossed — as people who “never forgot nor forgave” was very worrisome when it wasn't clear to me what it was that they weren't forgetting or forgiving and why it was that they decided to kill Fitz after leaving him alone for so long after the war.

I was also a little concerned about how Kugelman's interest in all this touched on the execution story. Until now, I'd been assuming that that was just an unfortunate incident — the kind of thing that happened all the time in the war and, in this case, was only unusual because it happened after the peace had supposedly been

declared.

But Kugelman seemed to imply that it was something else: that it looked like a hit and that it might be tied in some way to his business with Fitz. Fitz had told me that he'd been involved in the case as part of his new work with Van Bergen-Aarts and others at the beginning of the Cold War. But I couldn't see how that would involve the mob. As Fitz himself had told me, the trouble came after he had handed the two German sailors over to the Seaforths. They were executed by accident. Some wires got crossed and our boys set up the execution because, well, orders.

Chapter 38

Things were going to hell everywhere else as well. On the 27th, the Apollo mission caught fire and three astronauts were burned alive in their rocket – ironically enough while they were practicing escape routines.

And the Leafs were in trouble as well. The night Fitz was killed had marked the high point of the season for them: a 5-2 win over Detroit that put them up six games over 50% and in third place, close behind Chicago and New York. But the next night they lost badly, 4-0 against Chicago. And then again against Detroit. And then on the return match. And then against Boston.

It was the beginning of a slide.

I had a ticket for a home game on the 28th, about halfway through the collapse. The first part of a home-and-away set against Chicago. They were four games behind New York by this point with Montreal coming up strong behind. Imlach said he hadn't seen the Leafs play this badly since he joined them in '58.

Nothing I saw at the game said he was wrong. The Leafs were hurt, sick, and shiftless: Mahovlich was out with a charley horse; Sawchuk with his back. Shack, who'd missed some games because of the flu, was skating again — but he looked like they dug him up from a graveyard somewhere: he'd lost four or five pounds on the injured list. Red Kelly dressed but was skating on a twisted knee. And Bower was back on the bench for the first time after busting his hand.

That left Gamble, up from the minors, to start in net for Toronto. But you have to

wonder if they wouldn't have been better just laying a couple of sticks across the crease. Chicago got in three in the first period, including one where Gamble made a pretty glove-save on a slapshot from Jarrett... and then dropped it right behind him into the net. It got so bad that they brought Bower out — broken hand and all — at the beginning of the second period. Even Shack played a couple of shifts — I'm guessing in hopes that he might give some of the Chicago players the flu before the return matchup Sunday night. But after a reasonable second twenty minutes — the Leafs didn't score, but they also didn't fall further behind — things went off the rails again in the third. Bower let in two — a clean one by Wharram at the beginning of the third period that he had no chance on, and then an easy one from Pilote with five minutes to go that he let dribble under his pads.

The Leafs did score twice during the game — once in the first period and once in the third — but they were badly outplayed. So they tried to make up for it by being vicious. Baun got a kneeing penalty and Horton just about took Stapleton's eye out with a high stick. Conacher got penalties for cross-checking and then boarding the same guy a few minutes later. Pulford was sent down for an angry slash against Mikita. Pronovost tripped up Bobby Hull on a breakaway.

None of it did any good. Chicago gave as good as they got and it looked for a moment like Hull — who broke Bobby Baun's toe with a slapshot back in December — had rung the bell a second time: he sent a hard slapshot off Baun's left ankle in the third period, leaving him to hobble off the ice and complain about it all being deliberate afterwards.

And that's pretty much how I felt. Like it was all deliberate. Like there was

somebody behind the scenes working to an agenda that I couldn't see or control. Who kept scoring on me no matter what I did, and who, even when I tried to fight back, was master of a game I barely knew how to play.

Chapter 39

Nothing got any better in the third week after Fitz's murder. The Leafs continued to lose – 5-1 to Chicago on the 29th and then 7-1 against Montreal on the 1st – and the ME continued to stall on releasing the body.

Making things worse was the fact that Greta and Freddie seemed to think there was something I could do about it. I had one or the other of them on the phone pretty much every second day, asking if there were any leads, or if I'd had a chance to talk to Wally, or if I had any idea what could be holding them up at the morgue.

It wasn't until the fourth week that things began to change. The ME called to say that he'd release Fitz's body on February 7th – meaning Greta could finally set a date for the funeral – and I started to get some movement from the key people in what I was beginning to think of as the McCrae cases: Van Bergen-Aarts, the Mounties, and also, in a certain sense, Kugelman and his gang. Even the Leafs started to lose less badly – 4-1 to New York on the 4th and then 5-2 to Detroit on the 8th. Not the beginning of the end, as Churchill once said in a less important context, but perhaps an end to the beginning.

Van Bergen-Aarts was the first to break cover. I was just coming through the door after lunch on Thursday, when Nymphaea signalled to me to wait. She had the horn of the phone tucked under her chin and she was clearly not getting a word in with whoever was on the other end.

“Just a... Uh-huh... If you... Right... So why don't...” She rolled her eyes at me and made a flapping motion with her hand. Bracing herself, she tried again to interrupt. “Just let me see if he's in. I think I might have heard his office door,” she said in a long, quick burst. Then she punched at the hold button.

“Another satisfied customer, Mr. Sanderson,” she said, smiling at me. “Did you hear yourself come in a minute ago or was I imagining things?”

“Who is it?” I asked her.

She looked at her notepad. “A Mr. Van B something or other,” she said. “I couldn't get him to stop long enough to ask him to repeat his name, let alone spell it.”

I told her I probably should take it but asked her to give me a minute or two to get behind my desk. “I'll buzz you when I'm ready,” I said.

“Oh, I'm not going back on until I can transfer you,” she said. “The first person to pick up that phone is going to be on it for the rest of the day.”

I hung up my coat and hat and went through into my office. Everything was where it was supposed to be. I sat down in front of my desk and moved the folder I'd been looking at to one side. I squared my feet under the desk and clicked down on the intercom.

“All right, Miss Athanasopoulos,” I said, “you may transfer the call now.” I heard a click as she pushed the button. The telephone on my desk rang. I picked it up.

“Hell— ” I started.

“Is that you, Sanderson?” The voice cut me off. It was Van Bergen-Aarts. “I've been waiting to speak to you for over ten minutes!”

"I'm just back from lunch, Mr. Van Bergen-Aar— "

"Yes, well, let's get to business, shall we? I have just had a very unpleasant visit from a Mr...."

There was the briefest of pauses.

"From a Mr. Bondi. An unlikable man. He says he knows you, which I suppose I should have expected, given your line of employment. But at the same time I would have thought, Mr. Sanderson, that you would have shown more discretion than associating with — well, I can't really describe him as being anything other than a criminal type — a hoodlum, if you will. Or perhaps a thug."

He paused for a breath. I tried to take advantage but got caught halfway.

"I'm very sorry, Mr. Van Bergen-Aa— "

"Yes. Well, I do not think that sorry is quite enough, do you? No, I wouldn't think so either.

"Mr...." There was a pause again. "Bondi said that he works for a Mr...." — pause — "Kugelman, whom Mr. Bondi assured me is a 'very big guy,' though I don't think he was speaking of girth. And he said that you *also* know this Mr. Kugelman and that he had hired you to do some services for him."

Another breath. I decided there was no point trying to cross against traffic. I waited, thinking about whether there really was a distinction to be drawn between hoodlums and thugs.

"Is this true, Mr. Sanderson? What I would like to know is whether what I heard from this Mr. Bondi is true?"

He paused again. I'd been expecting him to continue, so was taken by surprise

by what appeared to be a genuine question.

"Ah. I'm sorry, Mr. Van Bergen-Aarts," I said. "What was it you heard again?"

"That this Mr. Kugelman hired you to do some work for him."

"Well, I could hardly tell you about any of my clients," I began after a short pause. "Or really even whether somebody *is* one of my clients. It's the nature of the business."

"But you do know this Mr. Bondi, then?" Van Bergen-Aarts asked. "This Mr. Giacomo Bondi. Or this Mr. Kugelman? This is what I want to know."

Suddenly I began to appreciate Bondi's little joke. "Bondi. Giacomo Bondi" did sound kind of funny. Especially coming from Goldfinger here.

"Why don't you tell me what's worrying you," I answered, ignoring his question. "That's the most important thing."

"What's *worrying* me, *sir*," he began, emphasizing his words, "is whether you are working for Mr. Bondi and this Mr. Kugelman. This, for me, is a real worry."

"Can you tell me why you are worrying about it?" I asked. "You can trust that anything you say will stay between you and me — for the same reason that I can't tell you who any of my customers may or may not be."

"But how can I know that you will not *act* on what I tell you, Mr. Sanderson. Hmm? If, for example, you are indeed working for this Mr. Kugelman, what if I tell you something that he can use against me?"

"I'm not saying that Mr. Kugelman is a client of mine. Or that he isn't. Just as I wouldn't tell him or anybody else if I was working for you. But if there's anything you tell me that I think will cause you or me to get into trouble with him or anybody

who I *am* working for, I will let you know right away. You don't have to worry about anything you tell me in confidence, and I'll stop you if I think you are going somewhere that might lead me to a conflict of interest."

"Well, I wish that you had said that to Mr. Bondi and Mr. Kugelman, Mr. Sanderson. It sounds like you have not been as careful with them as you are being with me!"

"I genuinely do not know what you are talking about, Mr. Van Bergen-Aarts. You are not a client of mine — or at least you haven't been."

"Well, why did you tell them about my involvement with your friend Mr. McCrae? Mr. Bondi told me that this Mr. Kugelman would like to speak with me about some work he was doing with Mr. McCrae after the war. When I asked what on earth he could mean, he told me that you had told Mr. Kugelman about my involvement at Achterveld and so on after the war. *He even knew about Van der Waals!*"

His voice had risen a tone or two. He was genuinely frightened.

I cursed myself silently. He was right. I'd said too much. My job is to be an investigator, not an informant. Even if he was paying me two grand. I should have asked Kugelman what he wanted me to look into and left it at that. Not tell him everything I knew about Fitz and what happened after the war.

"Listen," I said. "I'm sorry that you had a fright like this. I can't tell you whether Kugelman is or was a client of mine, but I can say I know who he is. Kugelman's a big name in certain circles around here and Bondi's his gofer. I've met them before."

Van Bergen-Aarts said nothing. I was starting to feel like a shrink.

“Why don’t you and I meet up and have a chat? Nothing you’ve said so far is going to put me in a conflict, and maybe there’s something I can do to help you out. If nothing else, I might know some things about these guys and their type that can help you. It’s my world, not yours, Mr. Van Bergen-Aarts.”

There was a pause. When he spoke next, he was sounding a little calmer.

“I am most grateful to you, Mr. Sanderson. I would appreciate this very much if we could meet. How quickly can you come?”

I took a look at my agenda. Since there was nothing I couldn’t cancel, I suggested that I head out right away. I opened *Might’s Directory* and looked up the consulates page.

“You’re in the Commerce and Transport Building, kitty-corner from Union Station, right?”

“Across from Union Station? Yes, that’s right,” Van Bergen-Aarts answered. “At Front and Bay. What you would call the eighth floor. 808. But, please, knock on 810. It says no admittance, but that is for my private office. I will cancel all my appointments until you are here!”

Chapter 40

I hung up on Van Bergen-Aarts and headed out to the reception area.

“I’m leaving for the day, Miss Athanasopoulos,” I began as I opened the door.

“That was— ”

“Ahh. That’s too bad, Mr. Sanderson,” Nympha interrupted me forcefully.

“Constable” — she stopped and looked at somebody behind the door I was holding, addressing him — “You know, I don’t think I ever got your last name. I’m so sorry.”

“It’s sergeant, anyway,” a man’s voice answered. It was the older Mountie from a couple of months ago. “And it doesn’t really matter. ‘Jim’ is good enough.”

“A Sergeant ‘Jim’ then,” Nympha said, holding the name with rhetorical tongs.

I closed the door, revealing the chairs we kept for visitors along the outside wall.

“I’m afraid I have an urgent call out of the office this afternoon, ‘Jim’,” I said. I thought that I might as well have some fun with it too. “I’ve had to cancel the rest of my afternoon.”

“Maybe I could give you a drive where you’re going,” Jim answered. “I’m sure it’s on my way.”

“I don’t know how you could know that,” I answered. “And I’m not sure what my clients would think if they saw me arriving in a police car. But I am sure that whatever it was, it wouldn’t be good for my reputation.”

“Then I wonder if your client couldn’t spare you for a couple of minutes, Sandy,”

Jim answered. He'd not forgotten my name. "My partner Bill's double-parked outside on Bay. I really couldn't spend more than a couple of minutes with you anyway."

He looked at his watch.

"Let's say no more than one cup of coffee. Why don't you ask your lovely secretary here to call whoever you are meeting and say that you'll be twenty minutes late? That you've had an urgent call you just had to take?"

Nymphaea glared at him. He had a way with the ladies, it appeared. A wrong one.

Since the choice seemed to be between taking ten minutes now or losing the entire afternoon, I agreed. We rode the elevator together down to the ground floor, Jim holding his hand on my elbow the whole way. He kept it there as we walked across the lobby, removing it only to open the door to Flytes.

"In the back there," Jim said peremptorily when Marge came over to greet us. He was pointing at the same booth Greta had asked for when she first came to me, back in October.

"I never knew you were a switch-hitter, Sandy," Marge began, winking at me. And then to Jim. "You gotta watch this guy, you know. That's where he takes all the girls."

"Coffee," Jim said, ignoring the pleasantries. "We're in a rush."

"Right away," Marge said. Nodding at me, she added, "*He* takes his black. What about you?"

"Two cream, two sugar," he said. "You can bring it with you. We'll seat ourselves."

We walked toward the back booth. Jim put me on the side Greta had been on, back to the street door.

"Listen," Jim began as soon as I was seated. "You don't have a lot of time, but we've got a couple of questions."

"Shoot," I said, trying to move things along.

"Well, the first is what you were doing with Kugelman?"

"For Christ's sake, Jim," I said, raising my voice. "I'm getting a little tired of this. Don't you have anything to do but follow me around?"

"Actually, it wasn't us who saw you two together," Jim answered. "Kugelman's got his own official fan club, as I guess you can imagine. They passed it on to us that you were talking to him."

Marge arrived with the coffee. She put mine down and then Jim's. "Black, and double-double," she said. "Anything else?"

"Nah, we're good," Jim said, giving her a dollar. He'd taken it out when we sat down. "Keep the change."

I waited until Marge had stepped away.

"Well, I don't see that I've got anything to say to you. Or that I have to. I meet people as part of my job. And maybe I met Kugelman and maybe I didn't. Since you guys know so much, you don't need me."

"You know that he's been following you around as well, right?" Jim asked. "Not him, but his guys: Bondi, Benvenuti, Lieberman?"

"Yeah, sure," I said, breaking my resolution not to say anything. "That's one of the reasons I might have been talking to him. But what has that got to do with you?"

Or me? He's a hoodlum, not a commie."

Or maybe a thug, I thought. I'll have to remember to ask Van Bergen-Aarts about that.

"You'd be surprised sometimes," Jim said. "Circles within circles, you know?"

"Anyway, think of this as a tip rather than as an interrogation. Kugelman runs with some very dangerous people."

"Ya think? I really appreciate the tip, officer. You know how trusting we tend to be in my line of work."

"Well, don't say we didn't warn you. You're swimming on our beach and you don't know where the undercurrents are. It's only a matter of time until me and Bill are gonna have to wade out and get you. After what happened to McCrae, we figure it's fifty-fifty whether you're gonna be floating face up or face down."

"Thanks again," I said. "But I really do have to go. I suppose there's no point in asking you to stop following me around?"

"None at all," Jim answered. "It's how we get our man."

Chapter 41

I got up and left Jim sitting in the booth in Flytes. I headed to the street entrance onto Bay. The weather was starting to get worse. It had been sixty-one degrees yesterday — a record — but we were heading back into winter today. After a decent morning, it was close to freezing, and the wind was starting to kick up. We were expecting snow in the afternoon.

I decided to walk to the consulate while the weather held. The Commerce and Transport Building was on the other side of Bay Street, five blocks down, where Bay meets Front. My overcoat was up in the office, but I didn't want to lose more time going back for it or by walking over to Yonge for the subway. If the snow came while I was down there, I could always take the subway back and then cut through Simpsons.

I soon regretted the decision. The wind was behind me, which meant it was straight from the arctic. Cold and biting. It was bad enough at my back. There was no way I'd be able to walk back up Bay against it. Especially if it started to snow.

Pulling my suit jacket more tightly around me, I ran across Bay at Temperance during a break in the traffic. When I got to the other side, I looked around involuntarily to see if I could spot either the Mounties or Kugelman's men as I ran. There were so many people supposedly following me I was beginning to wonder if I shouldn't sell tickets. Or hire a bus.

But if they were out there today, I couldn't see them. It's not as easy to pick up

tails in real life as it is in novels or the movies, at least not in a city. Unless of course they are trying to be seen the way Kugelman's men were on the night of Fitz's murder. If they don't want to be seen, there's very little you can do about it. You can stop and look in store windows, but I've always wondered why you would bother: you don't see anything in a store window that you wouldn't see if you just took a look around, except in mirror image. And if you are being followed, there's really no need to be subtle about looking for your tail. By definition, they already know where you are.

But even with a heads-up from Horseman Jim, I couldn't see anybody following me. I wondered if he wasn't just trying to make me paranoid.

I reached Van Bergen-Aarts's building in less than ten minutes. It's called the "Commerce and Transport," but really it should be called "Consulate and Import." There's almost a half-dozen consulate or foreign government offices in it — Mexican, Portuguese, Israeli, and, of course, Dutch, among others. For the remainder, apart from the occasional lawyer or accountant, it seems to be pretty much full of import-export businesses — a lot of them specializing in single countries or regions and so presumably run by the same governments as the consulates.

Given its occupants, it's a surprisingly dull, unattractive building: sandstone and yellow brick on the upper floors and an ugly brown marble-ish facade at street level. The colour scheme of a hospital ward. You expect more from diplomats and spies.

The few shops have the same sad look to them. The main tenant seems to be a

parking garage, whose “600 spots!” are advertised in large signs that cover most of the first-floor windows. Then there’s a basic doughnut/coffee shop in the basement for the people who work there and a mix of seedy, tired, or just plain odd merchants at the street level – a jewellery store that seems to specialize in big costume pieces and small gold necklaces and earrings: gifts for your mistress and apologies to your wife; a cigar store; a newsstand; and an off-track-betting shop. And finally, just to prove that things can always get stranger: a tiny store that sells bed linens — for that great otherwise untapped market of bankers, importer-exporters, and consulate men in desperate need of pillow cases.

I headed in the Bay Street entrance, pulling the door open against the wind. The foyer, if you could call it that, came from Acme Inc. Aggregate-cement-tile floor in a light pink and green with dull and dirty cream-coloured walls. There were only two elevators at this entrance, so I had to wait a few minutes before I started up to the eighth floor. When I stepped out, things were even more dreary than they had been below: the elevator opened onto a blank wall with only a small black letterboard listing the tenants. The pink-and-green cement had been replaced by a hotel-style carpet with brown-on-brown swirls, straight out of some third-circle-of-hell catalogue. One of the neon lights was on the fritz, buzzing loudly and giving off a yellow-brownish light.

No suites or windows opened onto this hallway, which seemed to cut across the middle of the floor. The letterboard gave the suite numbers for six offices — the Dutch and Israeli consulates, a mining company, a translation service, a couple of import-export firms that were sharing an office, and the regional accounts office for

an air-conditioning company. But there were no directions. It was apparently up to you to figure out whether you should go left or right.

Since I'd turned left to come into the building, I decided to turn right to find the consulate. After a few minutes and three turns, I finally saw a small sign ahead of me: Consulate General of the Netherlands. I walked toward the door, passing the other end of the hallway that led to the elevator: I'd done a half-circle. I reached the entrance and put my hand on the doorknob, forgetting that I was supposed to go directly to Van Bergen-Aarts's door. As I did so, a voice called out behind me.

"Mr. Sanderson, I'm so glad you could make it. Please, this way."

Chapter 42

I turned on my heel and followed the voice. Van Bergen-Aarts was holding the door to 810 open for me. The smoked glass said "Private" in old-fashioned gold letters. He was dressed up again: this time a cravat in what under the fluorescent lights looked like a red or pink paisley and tied like a gypsy scarf over a light-orange or cream-coloured shirt. He had on a black velvet jacket with red or orange piping along the edges. Only his trousers were restrained: a dark grey or black.

"I have not been at ease since my visit with this Bondi fellow, Mr. Sanderson," Van Bergen-Aarts began as he led me into his office. "It was most disturbing."

The door he ushered me through opened directly into his office and I had to go around the side of his desk to get to the visitor's chair. He closed the door behind me and waved at the chair, inviting me to sit. As I sat down, he walked past me to the interior door to his office. Opening it, he leaned around the corner.

"Schatje," he began to somebody I couldn't see, "can you make sure we are not disturbed? I have a privé appointment." Then turning to me: "Can I offer you some coffee? Something stronger?"

"Two o'clock's a little early for something stronger," I answered. "But also a little late for coffee. I'll be fine."

He turned back to the person around the corner. "Just the one cup of coffee then, darling. Verkeerd."

I looked around as he walked back to his desk. Compared to his clothes, which

were flamboyant, Van Bergen-Aarts's office was almost understated. A large and dark mahogany desk with matching sideboard. A Dutch flag with an orange ribbon on a pole in the corner. On the sideboard a photograph of the Dutch queen, and another of Bernhard in uniform with a young officer – Van B-dash-A himself, presumably. A colour picture of a young woman with a child. He saw me looking at it.

"My wife and daughter," he said. "Merce and Petronella."

I looked more closely. The woman was wearing a green day dress in a gingham check; the child was in a lacy white toddler's dress. I guessed it was taken about a decade ago.

"Did they join you when you came here?" I asked.

"They died in an automobile accident just after that picture was taken," Van Bergen-Aarts answered. "Petronella was two. They were killed on the A-13 in Rouen, on their way to see Merce's parents."

I expressed my sympathies. Van Bergen-Aarts went behind his desk.

"Those were sad days, Mr. Sanderson," he said by way of conclusion. "Sad days. But one goes on. One goes on."

We both sat silently for a moment.

"Well, I'd like to thank you again for coming. I didn't know where to turn."

"Why don't you tell me what happened and especially what made you so upset."

I said. "Bondi is a tough guy. But he can't be worse than you've seen before." I pointed to the war photo.

"It was not the man himself who frightened me," Van Bergen-Aarts answered.

"His type is, as you Canadians say, 'a dime a dozen.' No, it is who he represents who concerns me. This Mr. Kugelman and especially his associates."

"I'd have said the same thing about Kugelman," I answered. "He's also a type. Just a bigger fish."

"Ah yes, but what of the pond in which he swims, Mr. Sanderson? The pond in which he swims? That is the thing to be afraid of."

"Why don't you start at the beginning," I said, worried about what I might be unleashing.

"Ah. The beginning. But what is that? Where does something like this start? This too is a question."

"You'll have to decide," I answered, beginning to lose my patience already. "You're the one who wanted to see me."

"Well, as with everything else, it seems, we must go back to the war — to the end of the last and the beginning of what so many of us knew would be the next." Once again, Van Bergen-Aarts was settling into a lecture.

"I was telling you the last time we spoke about our preparations for what later became the Cold War. But this story has to do with a different war. A hot one, not cold."

"Sorry," I said, a little reluctantly. "I'm not following you." I didn't want to encourage him, but I also didn't understand what he was talking about.

"The Cold War, of course, Mr. Sanderson, is what we are currently fighting against the Soviets. We call it 'cold' because there is no shooting or explosions — or at least none involving a direct conflict between the main armies."

I nodded to indicate that I had heard the term before.

“A ‘hot war,’ therefore, is what we call it when the main armies *are* in direct conflict — as they so nearly were in our case only a few years ago in Cuba or Korea or Berlin.”

“Okay,” I said, moving things along. “A new hot war, after World War Two. Got it. Where?”

“Why, in the Middle East, of course. In the Middle East. Surely you have not forgotten the Arab-Israeli War of 1948-1949? Or 1956? Or, if you ask me, the one coming this year or next?”

“No, indeed, I have not, Mr. van Bergen-Aarts,” I answered. “But we were talking about you and Kugelman after the war. That’s the connection I’m not seeing.”

“Ah yes. Well, for that we need some background,” he began again.

“In for a penny,” I mumbled to myself.

“As I am sure you remember, the end of the war did not bring an end to what people called the ‘Jewish question’— ”

“What the Nazis called ‘the Jewish Question’, you mean,” I interrupted. He looked at me. “‘People’ didn’t call it ‘the Jewish question’,” I explained. “Nazis did.”

“Oh, you’d be surprised, Mr. Sanderson. I’m older than you and so remember how things used to be. What we now call anti-Semitism was much farther spread and far more open before the war than it is today. The idea that Jews were the source of societal problems was not restricted to the Hitlerites, I can assure you. Father Conklin — the great Anti-Semite of the North American Depression — was Canadian, you know!”

"Okay," I broke in. I didn't need a history lesson. "But you are talking about after the war."

"Yes. Well after the war, it was a different kind of question: what to do about the Jews now that the Germans had been defeated?"

"Of course, nowadays, we think of Israel as the answer: a homeland for the Jews and a reparation for Auschwitz. But this came later — in '47 and '48, and then of course the war in '48-'49. In 1945 and 1946, however, it was not clear that there would be an Israel. The British had promised independence before the war through the Balfour Declaration. But by the time the war was over, they had at the very least reconsidered the speed with which they wanted this independence to happen — and more probably were actively working against it. The war had taught them how dependent they were on Arab oil, and, in a contest between Arabs with oil and Jews without — well, let's say that the smart money, both in Britain and abroad, was on the Arabs."

"This really wasn't that long ago, Mr. Van Bergen-Aarts," I said. "And I used to work in a newsagent. None of this is unfamiliar to me."

"Of course, Mr. Sanderson. I forget that you are a curious man. Well informed about world affairs."

"But what has any of this got to do with Bondi? Or Kugelman? Or you, for that matter? And why would something from twenty years ago be an issue today?"

"Ah, yes. Get to the point, you say. Tell me what this is about! Well then, let me do that. The issue, you must understand, involved weapons. Armaments. How to acquire them, and how to prevent them from being acquired. The Zionist terror

groups were looking for weapons they could use to overthrow the British and build a national army. The British, not surprisingly, were looking for ways to prevent the Zionists from acquiring these same weapons and using them for that purpose — a position shared, I might add, despite their later change of heart and support, by all the United Nations: the United States, Canada, France, Netherlands, and so on.”

“Okay.”

“But an arms embargo? In 1945? After the Europeans and Americans have just spent the past six years building the largest, best-equipped armies the world has even seen? Impossible! Europe and the Middle East were awash in arms and munitions. There were literally rifles on every street corner and tanks in every neighbourhood. There were fighter aircraft and bombers sitting surplus and idle. And the soldiers who should be guarding these weapons were either on their way home back to their sweethearts or waiting impatiently to begin the voyage. Security was careless. It was a bazaar. A discount market.

“Very tempting, I’m sure you’ll agree, for groups who wished to overthrow their colonial masters!”

I started to say something but he held up a finger, cutting me off.

“Before you ask me to hurry on, let me say that this is where Mr. Kugelman comes in. I am sure that you are aware of the role organized crime — what the Americans call the Mafia — played in supporting Allied efforts in the war. Especially in Italy, of course, but also throughout Europe. It was the Mafia who made sure that the ports stayed open in Canada and America, that the ships were unloaded in Europe — and that enough guns and other materiel made it to the

front for our soldiers to continue the fight.

“What is less well known about this was the Jewish element. While the collaboration was agreed to by men like Lucky Luciano, the head of one of the Italian Mafia families in New York, and Rocco Perri and Tony Papalia, who led the Italian syndicates in Canada, the actual organization was carried out by their consiglieres — the men they relied upon for advice and organizational skills. And these consiglieres, in both Canada and the U.S., were very often Jews, Mr. Sanderson. Very often, they were Jews: Meyer Lansky in the United States; and, in Canada, our dear friend Mr. Kugelman.”

I said nothing.

“The point for this story, however, is not that they were Jews — though surely you cannot rule out a certain element of racial sympathy, especially as the revelations about the Hitlerite camps became public. Rather it was that, as Jews who were also criminals and running international black-market operations during the European war, men like Lansky and Kugelman were natural points of contact *after* this same war for Zionists who wished to acquire and smuggle arms into Palestine to fight against the British mandate.

“As our war ended, therefore, these men began to shift their attention from protecting their illegal empires in Europe to expanding these empires into new regions and businesses — by arranging for the transfer of arms from Europe to the Middle East on a massive scale.”

I waited for him to continue. He was getting to the point, and I didn't want to stop him or slow him down.

“But what is the connection to me, you ask, and why has this Kugelman taken up contact twenty years after the fact?”

“Well, this is where our previous discussion comes in. Because while the Western Allies were, in the beginning, unwilling to help the Zionists acquire and import weapons to defeat the British, or later, after the UN declaration, initially help the Israelis in their fight against the surrounding Arab armies, the Eastern Allies – the Russians and newly acquired satellite countries such as Czechoslovakia and Hungary – came out in active support of the Zionist cause. This was, of course, the opposite of how things work today. But, as I said before, the important thing in a cold war is that there are proxies who are willing to do the great powers’ fighting. It is far less important who those proxies are or what they stand for. ‘The enemy of your enemy is your friend’ and all that, as your Churchill once said.”

He paused for comment.

“So Kugelman sent Bondi to you this morning and...” I prompted.

“So Kugelman sent Bondi to me this morning to say that he would like to discuss Van der Waals. Who, as you may remember, your friend Mr. McCrae and I helped at the end of our war in order to help fight communists. Another proxy, you might say.”

“And the reason why he was interested in this was...”

“Mr. Kugelman was interested in this because Mr. Van der Waals’s job after the war was to defeat the communists. To prevent them from building alliances and to frustrate their efforts to develop proxies. In other words, Mr. Van der Waals was a soldier in the new kind of war against the Soviets that was then just starting up.

"Unfortunately, this also meant he was working against the interests of Mr. Kugelman, whose clients — my friends in the Israeli consulate that is just down this hall — were buying weapons for their war of independence through him. Mr. Kugelman was interested in me because, in the brief interregnum between the hot and cold European wars, we had been on opposite sides — and neither he, nor the Israelis, it seems, are willing to forget this."

Van Bergen-Aarts paused.

"Do you see my concern?" he asked calmly. Who knew that giving lectures on Middle Eastern history helps reduce anxiety?

"Well, I have to tell you that it all sounds a bit like a Rube Goldberg device to me," I answered. "You are being threatened today by a Canadian mobster who used to work with the Zionists in Israel because you helped a Nazi collaborator defect from Holland so he could spy against the Russians and stop them helping the Israelis."

I looked at him.

He nodded.

"That's right," he said after a moment. "You have summed the case up well, Mr. Sanderson. You have seized its essence."

"I've never put much stock in stories that end 'and so the Jews are after me', I have to confess."

"And yet it is all true, Mr. Sanderson. It is all true."

"Well, I can certainly see that you're scared. And it is true that Kugelman was particularly interested in what I knew about the end of the war."

He looked at me in silence. First I couldn't get him to talk. Now he doesn't want to say anything.

"Listen," I said to try and get him going again. "Why don't we just get to the point of why you wanted me down here? I'm an investigator who deals with insurance fraud, divorcing couples, and keeping people out of the newspapers when they get caught up in the vice courts. I'm not a spy. I don't see what I can do about whether the Israelis are angry at you."

"I will be taking care of myself in this matter, Mr. Sanderson, I can assure you," Van Bergen-Aarts replied. "I have bought an airplane ticket to Amsterdam and I plan to spend some time at home 'laying low,' as your Mr. Bondi would say."

"He's not *my* Mr. Bondi — "

"What I am looking for from you, Mr. Sanderson," he interrupted immediately, warming up again, "is a confirmation about your conversation with Mr. Kugelman. And perhaps also whether you think this might have had something to do with the death of our mutual friend Mr. McCrae. The garrote, as I'm sure you know, is a weapon of choice for 'the mob' — especially when it comes to people whom they perceive to be traitors."

The second part of this came as another shock to me. Ever since my conversation with Kugelman, I'd wondered whether he might not be involved somehow in Fitz's death. But I'd thought perhaps it had something to do with blackmail, or a dispute going back to the black market in Italy — assuming that what Kugelman had said about Fitz was correct. Nothing had prepared me for the idea that Fitz had been killed through some kind of international incident. We were

now several layers beyond what I'd have considered believable about my best friend only a couple of months ago. Deep in the pit and heading deeper, it seemed.

"Like I said, Mr. Van Bergen-Aarts, I can't discuss the details of any conversations I may or may not have had with people who may or may not be or have been my clients.

"But I can say that I've never discussed your role or anything else to do with smuggling arms to Israel with anybody. Your name often comes up when somebody asks me about Fitz's death, since you and I were among the last people to see him alive. But I've never told anybody — I didn't know, in fact, until just now — that you were in any way involved in anything Fitz might have done involving the Mafia, Kugelman, or anybody else.

"So Kugelman might have heard from me or anybody that I've spoken to that you and I were discussing what happened after the war on the night he was killed — I've told the police, I've told Greta, and I've told a reporter friend of mine. But I have never volunteered anything about what exactly it was you or Van der Waals were doing at the end of the war to anybody who didn't already seem to know."

"A precise and careful answer, Mr. Sanderson," Van Bergen-Aarts replied. "But also one that does not preclude the theory that Mr. Kugelman confirmed his suspicions about me and Van der Waals with your unknowing assistance. If Mr. Kugelman came to you asking whether you knew about Van der Waals, for instance, is this something that you would have denied?"

"Since Bondi told you that Kugelman knew about Van der Waals, and since that is the thing that is worrying you, then I don't see how whether he already knew it

when he spoke to me is really an issue,” I answered. “Your problem is that he knows about it now. If what you are saying is true, then it doesn’t matter who confirmed it — or even if he got confirmation. Your reaction was presumably enough to let him know that he was on the right track.”

“Yes, but what I need to know is whether I can trust you in the future, Mr. Sanderson. Can I trust your discretion or is my trust in you misplaced?”

“Well, in the first place, you’ve told me a lot of things without my asking you to, Mr. Van Bergen-Aarts. I don’t know much about being a secret agent, but I’ve always imagined that the ‘secret’ part played a bigger role than it seems to with you.”

“Now I hardly think, Mr. Sanderson— ”

“But secondly,” I said, cutting him off, “you’ve never been my client or indicated to me that anything you’ve said was confidential or something I should be careful not to mention to others. You know that I am friends with Greta and now Freddie, and that I’ve been investigating — along with many others — what on earth happened at the end of the war to Freddie’s brother, Rainer Beck. And you gave me some information connected to that case, which I have told to others as it has seemed relevant and helpful to me. Information is currency in my business, and currency is something you spend when it suits you.

“It’s not like I’m writing a book about it, but I do want to know what happened to those poor boys after the war. You yourself told me that it had something to do with Van der Waals and the meeting at Achterveld. The connection has occasionally come up with others in my discussions of that case. I can’t be held responsible if

there is some completely different aspect to this that you failed to warn me about but now want to keep secret from others who already know!"

I was speaking loudly at this point — almost yelling, in fact — and Van Bergen-Aarts made a motion with his hands to quiet me down.

"If you could speak more softly, Mr. Sanderson. The walls here are thin, and by happenstance, as I suggested earlier, the consulate of an involved party is just around the corner. They would normally take the other hallway to the elevator. But there is still a danger that loud talk could be overheard by those who are feeling perhaps most aggrieved."

I held my hands up in surrender, indicating that I'd keep my voice down.

"Well. I suppose I can see your point," he continued. "I am sorry that I did not indicate to you clearly that this was still a secret. Your friend Mr. McCrae and I were mostly worried about your friendship with Mrs. McCrae and the pressure you might come under now that Mrs. Cooper is here investigating her brother's death. We wanted you to know that there was more to the story than perhaps met the eye — and to realize that it was a story that had ramifications to this day in our fight against the Soviets.

"I did not realize myself the degree to which these other aspects — which I suppose may seem to you to be secondary, but are, if anything, far more dangerous — might come to the surface. I am sorry that I did not warn you — though I suppose I might use this in response to your charge that as a secret agent I am what I believe you might call 'a blabbermouth'!"

"You can trust me not to discuss your role in suppressing the supply of arms to

Israel after the war, if that's helpful to you," I said, picking up his original question. He started to reply, but I pushed through. "And you can trust me to be more careful — now that I know there's something other than precociously enthusiastic anti-communism in your past — with what I say about the end of the war and the business that led to the deaths of Beck and Dorfer.

"But you also have to know that I'm still working on their case for my good friends and my priority remains discovering, first of all, how Beck and Dorfer ended up on trial in that camp, and, secondly, who, if anybody, was responsible for quick-marching them to their deaths. In this, the question of arms for Israel — or even the Cold War itself — is secondary to me.

"So I will be more careful not to say anything unnecessarily. But knowing more about what happened at Achterveld and how this relates to Beck and Dorfer's executions is my main goal. And nothing you have said suggests that the Vans der Waals story is not an important part of this."

"In fact, I think it *is* an important part of your story, Mr. Sanderson," Van Bergen-Aarts replied. "I think it *is* an important part."

He stood up and put out his hand.

"I thank you for your candour. And your willingness to talk to me. I am feeling better now that we've had a chance to clear the air.

"I trust that you will both keep what I have said to you confidential and use your judgment when discussing other aspects of my story when you talk to people about the executions. Do I need to pay you in order to establish an expectation of privacy, Mr. Sanderson? Is this as it is with a lawyer, where you must be on a

retainer?"

"Actually," I said, "that's a myth about lawyers. They have to treat what you tell them as confidential, whether you pay them or not.

"But you don't need to pay me. Confidentiality is a business decision in my line of work. Investigators who talk about their clients don't keep them. But other than working on the execution case, I'm not interested in your exploits as a commie fighter, and you can trust me not to go blurting out what you've told me here to the first person who asks. I don't need a retainer for that."

"Well, in that case, thank you again. As I said, I will be leaving for the Netherlands very shortly and I would appreciate it if you could keep this also to yourself. But this should go a long way to providing me with appropriate protection from your Mr. Kugelman. I'm just sorry that we need to part on difficult terms."

Van Bergen-Aarts came around his desk and walked me out to the main office of the consulate. It was after five at this point, and everybody had gone home. We stopped at the main door. "Take a right here," he said, "and then follow the hallway down to the next left. That takes you to the elevators. Thank you once again — and dare I say good luck to you in your work on this tragic case of Mr. Beck and Mr. Dorfer? Or perhaps, if it is not in bad taste, mazel tov?"

We shook hands again and I headed back down the dreary hallway to the dreary elevators. When I got outside it was even colder than I thought it might be. Ice rain and a driving wind. I ran across to Union Station and took the subway up to Queen. Nympha had closed things up, so there was nobody in when I picked up my coat. I took a quick peek into my own office. As always, she'd put everything away. I put

on my coat and headed back out into the cold.

Chapter 43

I thought a lot that night about my conversations with Fitz, Van Bergen-Aarts, Kugelman, and even the Mounties. Perhaps, without really doing very much, I had found the answer to Greta's original case — those "foreigners" who had got Fitz so rattled last fall. It was too late to save him, of course, and it did nothing to solve what had become for me the bigger question of Freddie's brother and his friend Bruno Dorfer. But it did seem to answer everything Greta had come to me with on that otherwise pleasant morning in late October.

As hard as I found it to believe, it appeared that Fitz had led a double life during the war. Well, two — maybe even three — double lives.

The first, and most unbelievable, was as the linchpin in a black-market ring, organized by the Italian Mafia in Canada, to skim supplies during our fight up the Italian Peninsula.

What was unbelievable here was not that there was a mob-organized long-distance black-market operation, but that it was Fitzpatrick McCrae — my friend, the philanthropist lawyer, the man who had joined the Glamour Boys because it was a family tradition — who would take such an unnecessary risk. There was nothing the mob could supply that he didn't already have: money, reputation, access to power. And these were exactly the things he was risking by working for people like Kugelman.

Of course, I only had Kugelman's word for this — which was hardly a sure bet.

But even then, there was some circumstantial evidence. Things I'd never really thought about until Kugelman suggested the explanation. One of these was Fitz's long-term involvement with Ida Barone, both in Italy and later in Canada. She was a known black-marketeer and while I'd always thought his concern for her was mostly gallantry, Kugelman's story provided a different explanation.

And then there was the fact that Fitz had stayed in charge of the Brigade Headquarters Company for so long — the only officer in the 48th to avoid a transfer of command during our entire time in Italy. I was with him too, of course, as Provost Marshall, but that was different: liaison officers tended to stay in position until they were killed. And I never saw any reason to think that he was skimming supplies. But it is also true that he turned down opportunities to advance as an officer in order to stay where he was — and that O/C HQ Coy was the perfect place from which to run a skimming operation.

Fitz's second double life — which I found much easier to believe — involved his anti-communist work at the end of the war. The very things that made it seem unlikely that he ran a black-market ring in Italy in '43 and '44 made it all the more believable that he was part of a secret group preparing for the Cold War in Holland in '45 and '46.

Van Bergen-Aarts, Prince Bernhard, the Brits and Americans leading the post-war reconstruction — these were Fitz's kind of people: rich, successful businessmen, political figures, nobility. They would naturally turn to men like Fitz — an establishment figure, well-known in the right ranks of society. And he would just as naturally agree with their premises and be willing to help prepare for a new, anti-

communist, post-war order. Working in the legal department of Civil Affairs, and as a result working closely with both Canadian and Dutch politicians, generals, and intelligence agents, meant that Fitz was perfectly placed to assist in capers like the Van der Waals affair. And it is only a small step further to think that he might then also be involved in the attempt to cover it up — which is what seems to have led to the deaths of Beck and Dorfer.

This second double life also explained why Fitz was so upset when news of Beck and Dorfer's execution first broke back in the fall. Not only, as it turns out, was his wife closely involved in the story, but it was also the case that the sequence that led to those boys' deaths was set in motion by the operation he was running with Van Bergen-Aarts. As Fitz suggested that night in his study: the Seaforths hadn't realized that Beck and Dorfer were telling the truth about their status as deserters because the men who were working for Fitz and Van Bergen Aarts said nothing when they handed them over. So the Seaforths had acted on the assumption that men who were telling the truth were in fact lying. And it was this inaction by Fitz and Van Bergen-Aarts — however unwitting — that had led, in the end, to Beck and Dorfer's trial and execution.

But then there was the third aspect to this. The third double life: working against the Zionists as they attempted to acquire arms for their fight in Palestine.

Actually, I'm not sure this should be called a third "double life." As Van Bergen-Aarts said, it could be understood as part of Fitz's work as an anti-communist — working against the Zionists because the communists were working with them. But it was definitely a third and distinct aspect of what happened afterwards to Fitz, his

family, and others, including Van Bergen-Aarts and me.

I'm guessing that it was this strand, then, that led to the calls that Greta had overheard. Somehow, Kugelman and the people he worked for had started putting pressure on Fitz for his work at the end of the war.

It certainly does explain why she thought they were "foreigners." Even if we aren't talking about calls from the Israelis directly, Kugelman and his men have very different accents and ways of talking than anybody else Greta knows in Toronto. They might have sounded foreign to her.

It might also explain the way Fitz was killed. As Van Bergen-Aarts said, the garrote is a "weapon of choice" for the mob — and meant to intimidate traitors. Perhaps by this point they had got whatever it was they were looking for — the names of the others who had worked with him against the Israelis? Van Bergen-Aarts? Something or somebody else? Probably we'd never know: unless Wally has something he's not saying, there's nothing to connect Kugelman and his men to the crime. Kugelman knew about the relationship between Van Bergen-Aarts and Fitz even before I told him.

And then it hit me. But what about Van Bergen-Aarts himself? He was a very frightened man. But it would be a mistake to assume he couldn't act on that fright. I remembered suddenly how in the evening in Fitz's office he had accidentally opened the French doors to the backyard when he was pacing back and forth.

At least I'd thought it was an accident.

But the care with which he'd closed the doors afterwards — perhaps leaving them off the latch so that he could come back later? Given how scared he was of

Kugelman, maybe Kugelman had got to him first — and told him he had to kill Fitz if he wanted to stay alive. If that was true, then Van Bergen-Aarts was upset not because I had told Kugelman about him, but because Kugelman had asked me if I knew Van Bergen-Aarts. He was scared that this meant that Kugelman was finished with him and that, having served his purpose, he might be next on Kugelman's hit list.

The more I thought about it, the more likely I thought this was. I couldn't see how I or anybody else could prove it — without the garrote or other evidence in Fitz's office to point to him, all we had was Van Bergen-Aarts's strange behaviour the night Fitz was killed. And there was also the fact that both Kugelman and Van Bergen-Aarts suggested that it was the conversation with me that had led to the connection being drawn between Fitz and the Dutch consul. So maybe it wasn't Van Bergen-Aarts who did the killing. Maybe he was just to clear the route for one of Kugelman's men. Or the Israelis. We'd probably never know if we couldn't get one of them to talk. But if what I was thinking was true, then both Kugelman and Van Bergen-Aarts had reason to hide what they really knew of each other — since in each case it would tie them much more closely to Fitz's death.

In fact, this had to be what happened. The real person who was "being pressed for blackmail," as Greta had put it, was Van Bergen-Aarts, and in this case, the price was Fitz's death. Maybe Fitz knew about this. Maybe Kugelman and his men were trying to upset him before Van Bergen-Aarts did their dirty work for them — calling at all hours and threatening to tell Greta, or me, or the cops, or the Israelis.

I had a sudden chill. But that also probably meant that I'd been in danger as well

— that Kugelman wasn't interviewing me to send a message to Van Bergen-Aarts, or at least not *only* for that reason. He was trying to find out what I knew about Fitz's activities during the war. Kugelman had gone through two of Fitz's double lives with me — and hinted broadly at the third — and then praised me after I'd convinced him that my surprise at hearing of these double lives was genuine. If Fitz had confided in me at all, perhaps I too would now be dead.

I decided it was time to talk in detail about this with Greta. There was probably nothing we could do to get justice for her husband's death — there was no evidence and Van Bergen-Aarts was a diplomat anyway. But at least she'd know she wasn't crazy about those "foreigners" she thought were causing Fitz trouble.

We'd never know, perhaps, whether I'd actually solved the case. But I did have an answer that fit all the available facts.

It was a sad story, without heroes. But it was a believable one.

You can't ask for more in this business.

Chapter 44

I called Orangefield as soon as I got into work the next morning. I knew things were going to be busy with the funeral, but they weren't going to get any less busy over the weekend, and I thought it might give some comfort if Greta knew what I'd discovered about the case. Ida answered and said I should come out today. This morning, even.

I checked with Nymphaea, and, since there was nothing we couldn't cancel, headed out right away. I got to Castle Frank, the closest station to the McCrae's house, at around ten. The weather was quite mixed. Cloudy with a threat of snow, but temperatures in the low thirties. A real improvement after what had been a snowy and cold January.

It was about a third of a mile from Castle Frank to Orangefield. Since the wind was from the northeast, I decided to go via McKenzie, meaning it would be at my back for most of the walk and I'd be protected by the large houses and trees on Nanton for the rest.

It took me about ten minutes. I went to the side entrance and Ida answered almost immediately.

"Benvenuto, Sandy. Caro," she said as she opened the door. "I'm glad to see you again. Mrs. McCrae is with Mrs. Cooper in the sewing room. I'll bring you there right away."

She waited for me while I took off my galoshes, and then walked me out of the

kitchen and past the stairs, following the hallway left until we came to a small room at the front of the house: the “sewing room.”

The “sewing room” was a modest den that Greta, who wasn’t much of a seamstress, used as a study and sitting room. It got its name from a previous owner, presumably from the time when women of all classes devoted time and attention to needlework. The only nod to its origins were some embroidery hoops with finished designs in them mounted on the wall alongside the photographs and paintings. Greta told me that she’d bought them as decorations, ready-made.

Otherwise, it looked like a cross between a library and a tearoom: dark wooden shelves along the west wall, a couch and sitting chair along the east, a small rolltop writing desk looking out over the front door and garden, and a small pedestal table with matching chairs in the middle. A woman’s space.

The door was open and Ida knocked on the door frame. “Mr. Sanderson for you, signora,” she said, gesturing for me to enter as she spoke. “Can I get anything for you?”

Greta and Freddie were sitting on the couch, and they both stood up as I arrived. Greta was in a black knee-length dress with a brilliant-white collar and cuffs. Freddie was in a dark-brown woollen sheath dress. I walked over to the armchair beside them and Freddie took a step toward the tea table, picking up the teapot and looking inside.

“Can we haf some more hot water, Ida,” she said in her German accent, swirling the remnant. “Sandy, you like tea? Or you prefer coffee?”

“Actually, I’ve never been much of a tea drinker,” I answered. “I’d take a small

cup of coffee if it wasn't too much trouble, though."

Ida said that she'd return with tea and coffee and headed off to the kitchen. Greta had sat down again by this point, so I stood waiting for Freddie. She turned back to the couch and we both sat down. Greta's hand was on her knee. I reached out and put mine on top of it. "How are you holding up?" I asked.

We chatted for a bit about the past couple of weeks. They'd been stressful and emotionally trying, she said, but from a "business perspective" relatively easy. The estate had been in order.

"I suppose this is the good thing about having a lawyer for a husband," she said finally. "Everything is in its place and accounted for when he is killed. It makes becoming a widow so much easier."

I wasn't quite sure what to say in response, so I asked about the plans for the funeral. Once again everything was in order. "Freddie and Tini and Phyllis at Fitz's office have been so helpful," Greta said. "I have had very little to do."

We sat silently once more. Finally, Ida arrived with the tea and coffee. She put everything on the table in the middle of the room and left.

Greta and I watched Freddie as she put a new tea bag in the teapot and picked up the coffee. Holding the cup and saucer in her hand, she turned to me.

"Do you haf something with your coffee, Zandie?" she asked. We established that black was best for me and Freddie returned to the teapot, fussing with cups and cream. She came back to the couch, holding a cup and saucer in each hand. She gave one to Greta and then sat down with the other. She took a sip. I smiled uneasily at her. I was surprised how little I had to say. Fitz was gone. Greta was

widowed. When I introduced them to each other, I was twenty-nine. Now I'm fifty. Almost half my life ago. It was hard to believe. There was nothing to say that had not already been said. We sipped our drinks.

"You wanted to speak with us, Sendie," Greta said after a moment, businesslike as usual. "There have been developments?"

I told her about my discussions with Kugelman and Van Bergen-Aarts and said that I might have discovered the answer to her original case of the "foreigners" who'd been disturbing Fitz. It was all very far-fetched, I explained, but it did seem to fit the facts.

"I find it hard to believe that Fitz was a black-marketeer," I said in conclusion. "But a little less difficult to believe that he was involved in anti-communist work after the war. I really don't know what to think about the rest of it: Van Bergen-Aarts, Kugelman, Israelis. It all sounds a little too much like a spy novel to me, to be honest. Or maybe a *Boys' Own Adventure*. It does sound like they might be the people you were worried about, Greta. For whatever reason — and it is difficult to imagine Fitz really cared enough about them to be scared — they seem to have been laying into him since some time last summer."

"Kugelman," Greta said, trying out the name. "He was the foreigner, you think?"

"Well, him and his men," I said. "They've got a really different way of speaking compared to Fitz and me. Enough that you'd notice."

"Like dialect?" Greta asked. "We have that in Nederland as well. The way they speak on the platteland, the countryside — sometimes you cannot understand it at all."

"I don't think quite like that," I answered. "But it's definitely a kind of slang. And Kugelman, he sounds a bit like a Montreal or New York Jew. They've got a way of talking. Lots of Yiddish too."

"Ah well," Greta said. "I am glad that you were able to solve it. It is sad to think Fitz had this problem in his last days. But at least we know what it was."

We fell silent.

Freddie took a sip of tea and then stirred in her cup. She looked at Greta and then at me.

"Actually," she said. "I wish to ask you about Van Bergen-Aarts and my brother. Is it true that he had a role in the executions?"

"The story he and Fitz told me was that Van Bergen-Aarts and his men questioned Rainer, but then put your brother and Dorfer back into the system when they were finished," I answered. "As far as I can tell, what happened next was a misunderstanding."

"But it is still the case that Fitz and Dirk both knew that Rainer and Bruno were alive in those first few days after the war, right?" This was Greta now. "That was the thing I was surprised about. Even at the party."

"Well, they were confusing times," I said, a little surprised: I hadn't thought that we'd discussed that when I was with Greta and Freddie.

"The main thing that I've learned in the past few days was that this was all part of a larger anti-communist operation by the Dutch and Canadian intelligence."

"Dirk's men," Greta added. "Is this not correct?"

"Yes. Dirk's men," I said. "But also Canadians like Fitz, it seems. Rainer appears

to have given Van Bergen-Aarts in particular quite a fright when he came to them with the news that he'd seen Van der Waals at Achterveld."

"I was so disappointed to hear that Fitz had known about Rainer in those days, Sendie," Greta said. "We were quite close, Rainer and I."

"He'd been at your safe house, hadn't he, Greta?" I asked. "In the last days of the war?"

"That is correct," she answered. "Freddie and I were friends also in those days and she brought him to me soon after he deserted. He joined our cell and we became good friends as well as comrades-in-arms."

"And it is Dirk's men who question my brother?" Freddie asked. "After he tries to report about Van der Waals to them?"

"Yes," I said. "Van Bergen-Aarts was setting up the in-country intelligence network for the new Dutch government. Van der Waals was their first case, as far as I can tell."

"And this was something Fitz was involved in also," Greta added. "My Fitzpatrick." It was a statement. Not a question.

"I think so," I answered. "That was the thing that I really learned this past week from my meeting with Dirk. The degree to which this whole thing was a formal, covert, probably joint, operation. Van Bergen-Aarts kept emphasizing that this was the beginning of the Cold War. That he and Fitz had moved on from the fight against the Nazis and on to the fight against the Soviets, who they saw as the next big threat."

"And the Israelis," Freddie added.

"Well, the Zionists," I said. "This was in '45 and '46, before the UN resolution. You can't really say 'Israel' until '47 or '48."

"Gott in Himmel!" Freddie exclaimed. "I am so tired of people saying it is the Jews who are responsible! I wish there really is an international Jewish conspiracy. I would like to be in charge for a change!"

"I thought the West was on the Israelis' side," Greta said. "That we supported Israel."

"That's now," I answered. "But right after the war, things were different. Van Bergen-Aarts's point seemed to be that it didn't matter in those days whose side you were on. The enemies of the communists were our friends, and the friends of the communists were our enemies. The Zionists were getting help from the Russians, so that meant we had to stop them."

"And the Nazis?" Greta asked. "They too didn't like the Russians. Or the Jews. Were they on 'our' side?"

"This is the thing that I get angry about," I said. "The goal was to take over the remnants of the old regime and bring them onside in the new war. People keep telling me about how anti-communist the Nazis were. The bodies from the last war weren't even cold before Van Bergen-Aarts and others began looking for allies among them!"

"With Fitz's help," Greta said. It was a statement again.

"Well, I don't think he could have seen where this was going," I said, defending him.

"But he did know," Greta said. "He knew where Rainer was at the end of the

war.”

“Until the Seaforths got him,” I said. “What happened next wasn’t his fault.”

“But what about this ‘General Witt’, Zandie?” Freddie asked. “That does not seem like an accident to me. Who is this General Witt and what is his role? He works very hard to kill my brother, it seems.”

“I don’t think this general existed, Freddie,” I answered. “There was no such person in the Seaforths, the Army says.”

“I wonder too, Freddie,” Greta said. “Given what Dirk has told you about it, Sendie, it sounds like a big spy story. Perhaps this General Witt was part of this same story. Perhaps he was one of Dirk’s anti-communists.”

“If he existed, which I doubt, he’d have to be a Canadian,” I said. “Everybody says he was a Canadian general.”

“But we know from Dirk that the Canadians *were* involved,” Greta said. “Fitz was working with him on this. He had helped keep Rainer out of the correct procedure.”

“I agree,” I said. “But this goes too far. That would mean that the Canadians — or the Dutch civilian government — wanted Rainer and Bruno dead. Nothing I’ve heard says anything like that.”

“But it was the beginning of the next war, you said, Sendie,” Greta said. “For people like Dirk, the next war had already begun. In wars there are always casualties.”

There was nothing to say, so I stayed silent.

“As you say, the enemy of my enemy is my friend,” Greta continued.

“That’s what Van Bergen-Aarts says,” I answered. “Not me.”

"Yes," Greta agreed. "That is what Dirk says. And what about the friend of your enemy?"

I wasn't sure where she was going with this. I was about to speak when there was a knock at the door. It opened and Ida walked in.

"Is there anything I can do for you?" she asked, looking at Freddie and Greta.

"I should be leaving," I said, glancing at my watch. It was after noon. "You will have a lot to do."

"I would offer to drive you," Greta said. "But I do not feel up to it. I still do not feel like myself."

"It's a short walk to the subway," I said. "And a quick ride home."

"It is lovely to have this new line, no?" Greta agreed. "A lot of the women here use it for shopping after the morning rush."

"I'll get your coat and hat, Mr. Sanderson," Ida said, turning on her heel. Greta and Freddie each kissed my cheek and said goodbye. Ida returned to lead me out.

"Thank you so much, Sendie!" Greta called after me. "You have been very helpful!"

Chapter 45

In the end, I felt pretty good about my conversation with Greta and Freddie, and what I'd managed to figure out about the case. Better than you might think, given that we were about to bury a friend who'd died long before his time. One of my best friends.

I got back to the office about two, and spent the rest of the day in make-work: catching up on correspondence, sorting my desk drawers, drinking coffee. Nympha left me alone, except for the occasional cup of coffee. Every so often, I'd hear a chatter from the reception area, but nobody came through my office door. Apparently the girls could run things without me.

I decided to pack up at four and head home. As I opened my door, I saw Nympha leap to her feet and start towards me.

"Time for home, Mr. Sanderson," she asked. She reached for my coat and hat from the coat rack.

"It feels like it's been a long day," I answered. "Though I think I feel good about things. Solved the case, at any rate, even if we couldn't save anybody."

"It'll be tough tomorrow too," she said. "Mr. McCrae was a good friend."

"A sad day," I agreed. "It's been almost a month since the party."

"No time at all," she answered. "Not when it's friends or family."

She said she was planning to attend the service and ordered me to get a good night's sleep.

"You're burying a friend, Sandy," she said. "Never underestimate what that means."

I agreed I'd take care of myself and headed out to the subway. A good night's sleep and all would be clear.

Chapter 46

I got to my apartment about 4:30, and put on some coffee. It was a bit late for me to take another cup, but I was feeling exhausted. Just as I sat down to drink it, the buzzer went. I stepped over to the intercom and asked who was calling.

“Sandy,” the voice answered. “It’s me, Marty. I’m working on a story about your friend and I wondered if I could come up and talk to you about it.”

“Well, you can come up and talk,” I answered. “But I don’t know that I’ll have anything for you.”

I pushed the button to let her in and then opened the front door to my apartment. The stairway is just on the other side of Edie and Mabel’s apartment and I can see it from my doorway. I stepped outside into the hallway and waited. After a couple of minutes, I heard Marty on the stairs. She came through the doors to the stairs and looked initially the wrong way, turning away from my apartment. When she saw the numbers, however, she turned around immediately and saw me. She was dressed more or less the way she’d been at the Walker: jeans, cowboy boots, with a fringed leather jacket this time. She was carrying a giant handbag. It looked like it had been knit from strips of multicoloured cloth and was the size a housewife might use for her shopping. She wore it with the handles slung over her shoulder. If she’d tried to carry it in her hand, it would have scraped the ground.

“Sandy!” she said. “It’s good to see you. Thanks for letting me up.”

“No problem,” I said. “Though I still gotta warn you, I don’t want to be quoted on

McCrae's death."

"That's fine," she said. "It's enough if you'd just be willing to listen to me as I tell you what I know. It's a complicated story and I'd really like to have a chance to sort out what I know from what I think I know."

I agreed that I could do that and ushered her into my apartment. My cup sat on the coffee table in front of the couch. I pointed to it, asking her to sit down. I asked her if she wanted some coffee or tea.

"Actually," she said, reaching into her bag, "I've got something stronger here for you."

She pulled out a bottle of Five Star. "Why don't you grab a couple of glasses and we can have a drink while we talk?"

I went over to the kitchen to get the glasses while Marty got out her notebook. She flipped through it and started telling me what she knew before I even got back to the couch. It turned out her assignment was to write a combination police report and society profile. The fact that McCrae was dead, but also what had been known of him in his life.

"He's an easy man to fill a story with, Sandy," Marty said, twisting open the cap on the rye. "People like stories of philanthropists, especially ones with pretty wives."

She poured a generous shot of whiskey into both glasses and looked at me. "It seems to me, however, that there's a bit more to say. With all the news about the executions, for example."

I decided not to mention anything about my conversation with Kugelman or Van

Bergen-Aarts. Marty raised her glass and took a swig. I took a sip of mine.

"Well, I don't know what to tell you," I answered, putting the glass down. "As you know, none of this came through me. We were kept out of things in Civil Affairs."

"Yeah, I really wonder about that," she said. "I don't think I told you, but I had a couple of pigs come sniffing round right after we talked that day in the Walker. Wanted to know what you'd said to me, whether I knew McCrae, who'd I'd been talking to. The whole shebang.

"Course I didn't say anything, but it did tell me there was more to all this — and to McCrae, and maybe even to you — than I thought at first."

She paused and looked at me. I said nothing. But it did explain why "Jim" and his partner knew about my conversation with Marty.

"Oh, for Christ's sake," she said. "I'm getting so tired of all you old shits shutting down whenever the war comes up. Normally you can't get a man to shut up. Except now that I actually need to know what you think, a whole herd of cats seems to have got your tongues. You. Bill. Gus. It was twenty years ago, for crying out loud. And your friend's dead. There's nothing you can say's going to do him harm anymore, Sandy. It's the nice thing about being dead."

"The dead are never entirely dead, Marty," I said. "Or at least not as long as there are people who knew them. I mean, that's how we know about this case in the first place, right? Because Beck's sister started her lawsuit against the judge who sentenced her brother to death, and because a couple of captains and an ex-POW who runs a dry cleaners in Hamilton want to clear their names."

"Actually, I wanted to ask you about Beck's sister," Marty said. "Broomhilda, or

whatever her name is. I heard that she was at McCrae's house the night your friend was killed. Do you know anything about that? In fact, I heard that *you* were at McCrae's that night and that there was some big party. Wanna tell me about it?"

I'd sworn that I wouldn't say anything to her about the story, but in the end I just couldn't help it. I was trying to work it out myself and she was the only person I knew who wasn't involved but did understand most of what was going on.

"Listen, I'll tell you what I know, but you gotta keep my name out of the story. I've also had some trouble with the cops and people sniffing round to see what Fitz was up to, and I really want to protect his wife, Greta. I still work for Fitz and his family, even if he is dead."

"To be honest, Sandy, I'm not sure any of this is going in. It's basically a puff-piece to do with the funeral of a leading citizen. Gus was real clear he didn't want to hear any more about the executions, and since even Diefenbaker apparently thinks there's nothing to see here, it looks to me like the legs have been shot out from underneath that particular horse. I'm mostly interested in those kind of details for my own sake — getting up to speed and putting the information away in case things do blow up once again."

Our glasses were empty. She poured another generous shot into each. Picking up her glass, she tapped its edge against mine. "Chin-chin!" she said, throwing the shot down her throat.

"Ahh. That's the trick!" she said. She put her glass back down. "Right," she said firmly, picking up her pen and holding it over the paper of her notebook. "Out with it. What were you and Broomhilda doing over at McCrae's place that night?"

I told her a sanitized version of the evening, including an abridged version of what Van Bergen-Aarts and Fitz had told me, leaving aside the whole business of Van der Waals, and especially the stuff about trying to convert him and the other Nazis into Cold Warriors. I was still smarting after my conversation with Van Bergen-Aarts yesterday afternoon, and it seemed like the right thing to do. I trusted Marty, but I'd made a promise to Dirk.

"It turns out there'd been some kind of SNAFU involving the Dutch," I said. "I'm not quite clear on all the details, but basically they seem to have ended up with Beck and Dorfer by mistake and then, when they finally handed them over to us — I mean to us, the Canadians, the Seaforths — our guys misunderstood who they were and what they were supposed to be doing with them. A mistake really does seem to be the best explanation."

"But there's still a lot here that doesn't make sense, Sandy," Marty said. "I mean, if it was just a fuck-up, why are the pigs interested in it today? And also, these were not just your normal side of bacon: they didn't tell me much about themselves, but I could smell the fascism. This was commie-hunters, making sure the means of production stay unseized by the proletariat. It wasn't history they were after. They were worried about something today."

I told her that they'd visited me as well, a couple of days after we'd met at the Walker. "They told me that they knew about me meeting up with you and Bill — though, of course, they got it wrong about Bill."

"But then the other thing that doesn't make sense if what you are saying is true has to do with Broomhilda: what was she doing here, talking to McCrae? If the

whole problem was some kind of internal Dutch thing. Shouldn't she be talking to them?"

I explained the difference between Berthilde, the sister in West Germany who started the case, and Freddie, the sister from Amsterdam who had helped Rainer at the end of the war and was visiting with McCrae in order to get information about what had happened to her brother under the Canadians. But also that the lawsuit in West Germany wasn't really about how he'd ended up in their hands. "The real issue as far as she's concerned, Marty, is that the Canadians allowed the trial and execution to go ahead. It's more to do with what we did than how we got the chance to do it."

I felt bad keeping things from Marty, but I still wasn't sure how the Mounties had found out about me and her. I wanted to avoid them picking up on my conversation with Kugelman almost as much as I wanted to keep my name out of the papers, no matter what Marty found out or wrote. Good detectives, like good children, should be seen and not heard. Now seemed like as good a time as any to start being one.

Marty was on her fourth, generous, shot by this point, out-drinking me two to one. Her cheeks were flushed and she was beginning to talk faster and faster, jumping around from one subject to the next. I looked at the clock in the kitchen. It was after midnight.

"Marty," I said. "It's late and I've got the funeral tomorrow. How did you get here? I think you've drunk too much to drive, and the subway closed an hour ago."

"I can take a cab," she answered. "I've got some money in my purse."

"Listen," I said. "My bed's through there and I've got a new toothbrush you can

have. Why don't you stay the night here? You can let yourself out in the morning, and I'd feel a lot happier seeing you head home in the morning than worry about you this evening."

"That would be better, I think," Marty said. "The rye's really hit my head. I should have been watching what I was doing a little better."

"Don't worry about it," I said. "Just make sure you drink lots of water before you go to bed. And maybe take some aspirins. You'll find some in the medicine cabinet in my bathroom. Why don't you go get ready while I get things set up here."

Marty got up and walked to the bathroom. She had a slight wobble, but she made it all right in the end. She closed the door behind her and I heard the tap go.

Chapter 47

While Marty was busy in the bathroom, I went to my bedroom and took a quick look inside. I usually make my bed in the morning and today, despite the excitement, had been no different. If I'd had time, I'd change the sheets. But I really was feeling the hour and I wanted to get to sleep myself. She'd just have to make do with the bed as it was. I had the impression she wasn't going to be too picky.

I headed back to the living room and picked up the glasses and the bottle of rye. We'd drunk a little less than half, and since Marty was going quicker than me, I estimated that she'd probably had about five shots. Which is a lot for somebody who's lucky if she weighs more than a hundred pounds soaking wet. I went to the table and picked up the teacup and Marty's notebook. As I walked to the kitchen, I heard the bathroom door open and close, followed by my bedroom door. I returned to the living room and pulled the coffee table out of the way, realizing that I should have got sheets and a blanket from my bedroom while Marty was in the bathroom. I went over to the hall closet and got my overcoat. I could sleep in my clothes and then if I got cold in the night use my coat as a blanket. I put the coat on the floor beside the couch and turned out the lights. I lay down, adjusting my eyes to the darkness. I wouldn't be in the greatest shape tomorrow after a night on the couch, but there was nothing to do.

Suddenly the hall light went on.

"Hey!" It was Marty's voice. "What happened?"

I turned to look at her. She was standing, completely naked, at the entrance to the living room. Her hands on her hips.

"What do you mean?" I answered, trying hard to keep my eyes on her face. I'd not forgotten her story about Gus and Hemmingway's wife. She wasn't making it easy.

Marty's skin was translucent, almost pearl-coloured. She had huge breasts — much larger than I'd thought even — which hung heavy and low, ending in large, baby-pink areolas and nipples. A heavy thatch of coal-black pubic hair stood out like a punctuation mark.

"I thought you said your bed was through here," she asked, turning to point behind her. Her breasts swung with the movement; the change in angle emphasized the contrast between hair and skin.

"What are you doing out here?"

"Trying to get some sleep?" I answered hesitatingly.

"But I thought you said I should spend the night."

"I meant to sleep. That you should sleep here. In my bed," I said. "While I slept out here. Because you'd drunk too much to go home."

"Don't be such a square," she said, moving toward me. My eyes danced across her body as she moved. I couldn't help myself. She was beautiful.

"What do you think this is, the 1890s? I'm not a debutante in crinoline."

"I'm sorry," I said. "I didn't know we saw each other like that."

"Like what?" she asked. "It's a fuck, not a marriage proposal. Chicks don't need a ring to get their rocks off anymore. Haven't you been paying attention? It's the

sexual revolution, baby!"

"I guess I hadn't thought you'd be interested in an old man."

"It's just sex, Sandy," she answered. "I've been places where they won't let you in the door if you don't let them have a poke first. Christ! I thought you were less repressed!"

By this time she'd reached the couch. She put her hand out to me.

"Come on," she said, pulling me up. "We don't have to fuck, if you're worried about what your mother will say. But I'm not leaving you out here all night to sleep in your clothes on the couch."

She led me by the hand to my bedroom.

We got to the bedroom and she turned me around to face her, pushing slightly against my chest until the backs of my knees touched the edge of the bed. She stood up on her toes and, hanging from the back of my neck, kissed me deeply. She let go and stood back on her heels again. She pushed gently against my chest with her hands, knocking me backward. She undid my belt and unbuttoned the fly, raising my hips as she pulled my pants and underwear down and off. My penis sprung out, fully erect.

"Well, at least one of you isn't afraid of women," she said, wrapping her hand around it, overhand, pulling it toward her. "I'm guessing this little guy doesn't think we need to find a priest first."

"Some of our comrades do grasp the main tasks, but their grasp is not firm and so they cannot make a success of their work," she added.

"That won't happen with me."

She reached down and started unbuttoning my shirt, starting at the bottom. When she reached the top, she pulled it open, freeing my arms one after the other. She rolled up the hem of my undershirt. When she got to my shoulders, she pushed my arms up, over my head, and pulled the undershirt off. I was now completely naked and Marty was on top of me, the tip of her left breast against my chin. We were lying across my bed, a queen. The back of my head lay at the far edge, my hips at the side closest to the door.

Marty settled down against me, hanging her hands over my shoulders. She moved so that her breasts fell on each side of my face, against my cheeks. Like a receding wave she started to pull back, sliding down my chest. When she reached my pubic bone, she stopped and started pushing back again, the wave returning. This time she pulled her head and chest up, dragging her pelvis across my body. I felt the coarseness of her pubic hair against my chest. A slight irritation as it tangled and rolled across my chest hair.

She ended up in a sitting position across my upper chest, knees tucked under my shoulders, straddling. She adjusted her weight, rotating her hips slightly, pushing toward me. I could smell her arousal: musty, sweaty, earthy. A hair tickled my chin.

"Lick it," she said, arching her back and swivelling her hips farther forward. "Lick my cunt, Sandy."

She leaned back, arms on the bed behind her, pushing her hips higher, against my mouth. I stuck out the tip of my tongue, pulling it upward, keeping it tense. She sighed. "Like that," she said. "Do that again. But harder."

I pushed harder, this time with an open tongue, mouth wide.

"Bite me, Sandy," Marty said. "Let me feel your teeth." I opened my mouth wider and she pushed again. The teeth of my upper jaw rested against the skin just above her pelvic bone, my lower teeth and jaw sunk into the softness of her labia. I allowed my teeth to rest on her skin, pushing slightly; careful not to pinch. I rubbed again with the flat of my tongue, bottom to top, tensing when I reached the apex. I pushed softly with the tip against her clitoris. She shuddered.

I raised my right shoulder slightly, hinting at a change of position. Marty started a slow roll to her right, toward the end of the bed, pulling me with her. I reached underneath and pulled her hips up and backward, straightening her to the edge of the bed and pulling her slightly toward me. My feet were on the floor. Using my knees for leverage, I straightened my back, raising myself at an angle above her.

Marty lay on the bed beneath me, arms raised above her head. Like a hippie girl lost in some psychedelic dance. Her head was turned to her right, eyes closed, focused on sensation. Her legs were spread, bent at the knee, feet flat on the bedspread. Wide. Exposing herself. I leaned forward, running my hands along her sides, kneading with the heel of my hand. When I reached her breasts, I turned my hands over, cupping their sides. I felt their weight. Raising my hands, I pushed them up, bringing them together. I let go, and using my hands for support lowered my face to her stomach, kissing the soft skin by her navel. She made a low purring noise.

Sinking slowly to my knees, I pulled my lips down her body, maintaining contact. I felt the coarseness of her hair against my bottom lip, then the damp earthiness

again. Marty spread her legs farther apart, opening wider. I let myself sink down until my chin touched the mattress, my nose against the top of her slit. I opened my mouth until my teeth were clear and then pushed back up, tongue broad and flat against her. As my upper lip and teeth cleared her mound again, I closed down, pulling my teeth back. Marty reached down, placing her hands on both sides of my head. Guiding me. I closed my mouth against her and pulled back, drawing her out with my lips. Then I pushed back down, using my tongue for pressure, pushing in. Tasting. Marty hummed slightly. I raised my mouth once more, pulling up with my lips. And back down.

“That’s it, you motherfucker,” she yelled suddenly, pulling my head in hard. “Don’t stop! Right there!”

She spread her legs wider as she pushed me down, forcing her hips up against me. She let out a groan, and then clamped her knees tight against my head. She pushed my head back, away from her. Stopping its movement.

“Don’t move,” she whispered after a second. “Don’t move.” She held my head in place a little longer, and then released the pressure. She opened her knees. I started to drag my tongue against her again.

“Stop!” she said sharply, raising my head with her hands. “Too soon.” She reached under my shoulders and pulled my head up toward her. She licked my chin and cheeks, tasting herself on me, before pushing her tongue deep into my mouth. She pulled back. She placed her left hand in the middle of my chest and started to push me up.

“Equality between the sexes can only be realized in the process of a socialist

transformation of society as a whole,” she said, reciting. I looked at her without comprehension.

“It’s Mao, again, you moron.” She laughed. “In this case, I think it means that the chick needs to be on top sometimes.” She reached down with her right hand, wrapping her palm around me. I was soft.

“Or maybe it means that we’re done when the chick gets off.” She rolled me onto my side. “I didn’t know Willy here was a Marxist.”

She ran the tips of her fingers up lightly from my scrotum to the tip of my penis. Nothing.

“I was going to say, ‘I need you to fuck me right now,’” she said. “But maybe we need a break first.”

“I’m sorry,” I said. “I don’t know what the problem is. I just don’t think it’s going to work this evening.”

“From each according to his abilities, I guess,” she said, flopping down beside me.

“Or not.”

Chapter 48

The next day was the funeral, which went about as well as these things can. Fitz and Greta were Anglicans, and the service was held downtown at the Church of the Redeemer. This is the church for their set and the funeral was well attended — as you might expect for the funeral of a man as well liked, respected, and active in philanthropic circles as Fitzpatrick McCrae.

Greta was in a long black dress with a veil. Quite old-fashioned-looking. Freddie had on what looked like the dress Greta had been wearing when I visited with them in the sewing room on Friday. Tini was in what passes for mourning dress among the kids today: black cotton miniskirt, black blouse, cardigan, and mid-calf boots. It was cold weather for an outfit like that. Marty managed to get home and change before things began. She was dressed much the same as the night before, except all in black, with a silver gypsy belt, low on her hips, to provide colour.

Fitz's father had passed away a decade or so ago, about the time Fitz bought Orangefield. But his mother was still alive. She arrived with Greta, Freddie, and Tini, in a long black skirt, black blouse, and cardigan. She looked small and defeated. She was in her eighties and Fitz was her only child. Thank God, there was Tini. At least her line hadn't died out.

McDumont was there as well — in police-issue plainclothes: a dark-brown woollen suit, fedora, and tie, and black oxfords, with a black armband to indicate it was a funeral costume.

In fact the only person who was missing was Van Bergen-Aarts. He told me he was going back to Amsterdam, but I'd expected him to be at the funeral. If he'd gone before, then he really must be scared. I didn't like him very much but he took his duties as Consul very seriously. I couldn't imagine him ignoring the funeral of a man as prominent as Fitzpatrick McCrae – especially given their service together and the fact that his widow has been herself a resistance fighter in his home country.

After the service, we followed the hearse to Mount Pleasant Cemetery. The crowd here was much smaller than at the church. It had been cold all day — teens and low twenties in the morning, rising to no more than thirty by midday — with strong winds from the north. The mourners hopped from foot to foot to stay warm. I worried about Mrs. McCrae, Fitz's mom, who seemed frail. And Tini, who was sure to get frostbite. After a short and hurried service at the graveside, we walked quickly to our cars and drove away.

The needs of the living take precedence over those of the dead.

Chapter 49

I got home about three. Since it was a Saturday night, Edie and Mable were coming over to watch the game. Leafs at home against Chicago. None of us had much hope. But even hopelessness looks better in colour.

I felt bad about the comparison, but as I was waiting for them to knock on my door, I thought about just how different things had been the last time we had planned to watch a game together: the Leafs were on a winning streak and my best friend had been alive. It was the night I cancelled our evening in front of the game that everything had started to go wrong. Fitz was killed and the team that might as well be my other best friend began its long slide to irrelevancy. Sure, you shouldn't compare being murdered to a starting losing streak. But watching the Leafs drop in the rankings didn't make Fitz's death any less painful. Or vice versa.

The Kerr sisters knocked about quarter to eight. As I let them in, Edie asked if I could run across to their apartment to pick up the beer. "I bought a case of Old Vienna," she said. "It's in the kitchen in a tub of ice." As I always say, if there's one thing Coburg girls know, it's how to have fun at a hockey game.

When I got back to my place, Edie and Mabel were sitting beside each other on the couch. The blanket I keep beside it was across their knees.

"I'd like a glass, if you don't mind, Mr. Sanderson," Edie called out as I started putting some of the bottles in the fridge. There was a murmur back and forth, then Edie again. "Mabel would like a shandy," she said. "If you have any lemonade or

ginger beer.”

I didn't, but I did have some lemons, and so was able to come up with a close approximation. Since I used tap water, it was a little flat. But then Mabel's not a complainer.

I gave the girls their drinks and turned on the TV. I sat in my armchair while it warmed up. We were a minute or two early. There was an Export ad on — a couple camping at the side of what looked like the St. Lawrence. Which was beautiful and looked like fun — except for the gigantic beer company billboard they decided to camp beside. I camp to get away from it all, not to make sure I really know my billboards. But it takes all kinds, I guess.

Then, finally, the harp and the butterfly: “A CBC colour presentation... Again, from coast to coast, it's *Hockey Night in Canada*.”

The opening theme began with swirling trumpets before falling into a march. Mabel waved her hands like a conductor. “Oom pah pah!” Pictures of Bower, Shack, and Connagher diving and falling. “Brought to you by Imperial Oil Limited and Esso dealers, agents, and distributors. Serving your community!” There was a final swell and then Bill Hewitt came on — “Hello, Canada, and hockey fans in the United States.” The camera was on centre ice, the platform McDumont had found so ridiculous was down and the flags were furled. The players were skating in circles in their respective ends, Leafs to the right, Chicago to the left.

The fans started up and the flags began to waft. First the Stars and Stripes and then the opening bars of the new anthem, “O Canada.” The camera cut to the new Expo 67 sign above the south-end bleachers. Back to the players, lined up on the

ice. On the TV, the colours didn't look as bright as they did at the Gardens. The Leafs' blue was more like the regular one I was used to. And Chicago's white wasn't glowing like lightbulbs. Nowadays, I guess, it's the crowd at home that matters. The players skate for the TV cameras and the fans in the stands are there to provide a soundtrack.

And then the anthem was over. The linesmen took up their positions, Keon lined up against Esposito at centre. The referee dropped the the puck.

The first one went in faster than anything I've ever seen before. And it was for the Leafs. Esposito won the draw for Chicago, but the rest of his team just stood around watching. Keon charged through him and grabbed the puck – which Esposito had sent straight back rather than to the side – before anybody on the red line could react. Pilote, the Chicago defenceman, managed to slow him down a little at the blue, and Hull woke up suddenly and rushed back to help his teammate. They managed to push the puck out over the blue line, briefly, but they just couldn't keep Keon out. He picked it up again and circled back, pushing Pilote with his left hand like a linebacker while holding his stick in the right. In the Chicago goal, De Jordy seemed to take a second or two to understand what was happening. By the time he lined himself up, it was too late. Keon did one of those "dekes," as they call them nowadays: De Jordy went left, Keon went right, the puck went in an open net. 1-0 Leafs. 19:49. I can't understand how a team that scores so quickly can end up so often on the losing side of the ledger.

Mabel waved her drink.

"Yay!" she shouted before turning bright red.

"I think this is going to be the night, Mabs!" Eddie added, tapping glasses with her sister.

It looked like she might be right. Chicago tied things up a couple of minutes later, but you couldn't really complain about the rest of the period: another goal each, a couple of fights, and two guys out with misconducts. The second was a bit slower but still exciting. A goal from Stemkowski with about five minutes to go put the Leafs back in front.

The third period turned into a free-for-all. Hull got his second goal of the night about twenty-seconds in, but Kelly put Toronto back in front a couple of minutes later with an assist from Hillman.

"I think they're going to do it, Mr. Sanderson!" Edie yelled as we crossed the ten-minute mark of the third period. "I think they're finally going to win one!" Mabel was leaning forward, staring at the TV and clenching her fists unselfconsciously.

And then Hull got his third goal for Chicago, just stopping the Leafs from winning their first game in eleven starts. A tie, 4-4.

"Yeah, but they broke the losing streak," Edie said when the game was over. "That's the important thing. You can't start winning from a slump. This is the turning point. This is when things start going our way!"

I walked across the hall with the sisters, and then cleaned up the glasses and folded the blanket when I got back. It had been a good, tough game. Even the officials had got involved. Ellis caught the referee in the groin with a stick with about five minutes to go in the second period, sending him off the ice and when it was clear he wasn't coming back after a short break, one of the linesmen took

over. But he decided to let the players take care of things themselves. There were no penalties in the third, even though it was at least as rough as the first and second. Apparently the law had better things to do than break a sweat busting people for beating each other up.

Kill them all and let God sort them out, I guess.

Chapter 50

Sunday night was even better than Saturday. The Leafs travelled down to Boston, who had been doing worse than Toronto, even with Orr. Selling out everywhere but still losing more than they won.

And they did it again. After going eleven games in twenty-five days without a victory, the Leafs finally put one in the left-hand column. A win!

I followed the game on the radio, and it sounded like a good one. The Leafs got one goal up about a third of the way through the first period, when Kelly scored off his own rebound. They lost one in the second period — it sounded like Kelly kicked it into his own net, making him a wash on the night. But then Stemkowski – sweet Stemkowski – put the game-winner in when they came out for the third. Victory at last!

Edie was waiting for me when I left for work Monday morning.

“Did you hear the game last night, Mr. Sanderson?” she asked. “They finally won one!”

“I did, Mrs. McNeill. It sounded like a great game, though the *Globe* was very down on them this morning.”

“Ahh, that’s the reporters just trying to show they are connoisseurs. They think you don’t know anything if you can’t be critical about it. It was the same when I was in politics or with my husband Erin in the war. People who can’t do any better than chirping from the stands. The important thing is that the Leafs won. Finally.”

“Well, they’ve got lots of time to lose again, still.”

“They’ve turned a corner, Mr. Sanderson,” Edie replied. “I can feel it in my bones: they’re going to put the past behind them and win it all this year.”

“As long as the Habs don’t get it, I’m happy,” I said. “I can’t see the Leafs winning the Cup, but they might be able to stop Montreal.”

We agreed to disagree, and I headed out to catch the bus. It was in the teens and windy, but I felt great. Even the threat of wet snow in the afternoon couldn’t throw me off. Really, I shouldn’t feel this way about a hockey game.

Chapter 51

After some record setting lows on the weekend, Monday was a bit of an improvement: twenty-five, rather than ten or twelve below.

There was nothing much in the *Globe* this morning. The weather records from the weekend, of course, and news that the Conservatives would choose a new leader in the early fall. In Quebec the teachers said they would suspend their strike if the government stops its back-to-work legislation, while at General Electric, the workers just voted to begin a strike of their own. A plane crash killed four fans who'd tried to fly down to Boston for the game on the weekend. And Johnson was waiting for the Vietnamese to respond to his suspension of bombing.

I was a little early and when I got to Queen, I decided I'd walk the couple of blocks rather than cut through Simpsons. The weather was such an improvement over weekend, it seemed a shame to stay indoors. I arrived at the Bay Street entrance about ten to nine. There was a crowd, but there was still a few minutes to go before the last-minute rush.

As I put my foot on the first step, there was a sudden uproar behind me: brakes, horns, the blast from a bus's air brakes.

I turned toward the street, expecting to see an accident. A brown police Caravelle had rammed itself at an angle against the curb, its left front bumper and wheel digging into a little snowbank left by the plow that linked together the parking metres. Behind it, the southbound traffic was already starting to snarl. The Number

6 was jammed up, almost touching the Caravelle's rear bumper in the lane closest to me. Its driver was waving his arms in annoyance. The passengers standing at the front rail of the bus were leaning forward, looking over their newspapers. They were going to be late for work. In the far lane, a yellow Impala was trying to squeeze through the narrow gap between the Caravelle and a cab facing the other way, waiting at the traffic light in the northbound lanes. It looked touch-and-go.

The front doors of the Caravelle opened simultaneously. On the far side, a uniformed constable jumped out and ran toward the back of the car, gesturing toward the traffic. On the near side, McDumont unfolded himself from the front bench.

He looked up.

"Haud it right there, boyo!" he yelled, catching my eye as he scrambled over the low snow, hat in hand.

The crowd turned from watching the street to watching me.

"That's right! You! Sanderson!" McDumont yelled again. He took the last couple of steps. Behind him the uniformed constable had begun to untangle things. The Impala was on its way and the policeman was waving for the bus to pull out. Somebody honked again.

McDumont grabbed me by the elbow. "Right," he growled. "It's time you and me had a wee talk."

He turned and started pushing me toward the car.

"Get the door there for me, Ronny," McDumont shouted over the traffic noise to his uniformed partner. The constable looked over his shoulder and, leaving the

traffic to fend for itself, ran quickly to the back right passenger door, reaching out for the handle and pulling sharply. McDumont pushed me ahead of him over the snowbank.

"Put him in the back," he said as I scrambled over. The snow collapsed under his right foot, causing him to stumble forward onto the sidewalk.

"Goddamn it," he muttered, righting himself against a parking meter. He took a big step over the snowbank before collapsing backwards onto the front bench through the open door.

"Can't give you more than a six for technique, Wally," I said, figuring I should keep it light.

"I'd be taking things a little more seriously if I were you, me man," Wally said sternly. He righted himself on the bench. "There'll be plenty of time for yer japes after we get ye back to the station."

He reached out and pulled on the front door. With the extra weight in the back seat, it had sunk deep into the snowbank. It didn't budge.

"Goddamn it, Ronny," he yelled. "It's called parallel parking for a reason, you know." He pulled again and the door broke free, pulling down a small landslide of dirty slush. He slammed it shut. Hard.

Ronny had jogged back around the left side of the car and was slipping into his seat. He pulled his door closed as well and, without saying anything, threw the car in reverse. There was a sharp whine and screech as the tires spun then caught on the icy pavement and we jumped backwards. Ronny kicked the brakes immediately and slammed back into drive, pulling hard on the steering wheel. We made a tight

U-turn, fishtailing slightly as Ronny straightened us up in the empty-between-lights northbound lanes. We started up Bay, facing the last remnants of the southbound rush-hour traffic.

I waited until we were past Queen.

"So any plans to tell me what this is about, Wally?" I asked.

"You'll find out soon enough, me man," he answered, staring straight ahead.

"How about now, Wally," I said. "Seeing as you've grabbed me off the street and all."

Wally said nothing. Ronny continued to drive.

When we got to College, Ronny turned right, pulling up across the street from Police Headquarters.

Wally turned to me.

"You stay here while we see what they want us to do with ye," he said, opening the door. He climbed out and went around the back of the car. He waited for a gap in the traffic and then ran across, disappearing into the old technical school that now serves as the city's police headquarters. Ronny sat and the wheel, staring ahead.

"Fine day, constable," I said conversationally, leaning forward. Ronny said nothing.

"Right you are," I answered. "Why don't I just sit here quietly till Wally gets back."

I leaned back again. We sat in silence.

After a few minutes, Wally came back out of the police station followed by another man. They ran across the street. The street-side passenger door opened,

and the new man jumped in: It was "Jim," the older of the two Mounties who'd been visiting with me at the office. Wally ran around my side of the car and returned to his place in the front passenger seat. After he was seated, he turned back to face me.

"You already know our friend Jim here," he said.

"I do indeed, Wally," I answered, "though I thought he played for a different team."

"Aye, well it's more like a different division of the same team," he said. And then, sanctimoniously: "There's no 'us' and 'them' when it comes to catching villains, Sandy."

"Well, I'm glad to hear it," I said. "That'll be helpful to know if we run into some villains."

"Put a sock in it, Sanderson," Wally said, returning to form. "I've no time for yer sense o' humour this morning."

"Jawohl, mein Kappetein," I said.

"And stop pretending you're some kind of goddamn hippie, Sandy," Wally said. "Yer no impressing me."

"It's just I've never been in a razzia before, Wally," I said. I turned to Jim. "It's not like I've not been willing to sit down with both of you whenever you've asked."

Jim looked at me silently.

"There's no need for a kidnapping," I finished.

Ronny had turned around again and was now heading west along College. We drove for a couple of miles. Just before the crossing with Dundas West, he turned

right, up Lansdowne, and then left again, west, when we got to Bloor. As we approached the Humber, he broke off to the left once more: Mossom and then Riverside, slowing down as he navigated the narrow, winding streets.

We were in Swansea, one of the last villages from the pre-Metro era. A mostly rich neighbourhood that had been annexed by the city — along with Forest Hill back at my end of town — at the beginning of the year.

“You’re not planning to tell me what we’re doing here, by any chance, are you?” I asked.

“We thought it might be better to let you do the explaining,” Wally answered.

He turned to Ronny.

“It’s just up here, on the left.”

Ahead of us the street was packed with official vehicles: radio cars, undercover cars, a couple of black Lincolns, an ambulance. Another crime scene.

Robby pulled to the curb, facing traffic.

“You stay here a little while more,” Wally said, stepping out. He walked round the back to let Jim out of what was now the curbside passenger door. A small crowd of men stood on the sidewalk, conferring. Wally and Jim walked toward them.

A tall young man turned toward them, hand outstretched. He was blond, with a tight, military-looking haircut. Civilian clothes: a long black woollen overcoat over a black suit, white shirt, neutral tie, patent-leather shoes. They shook hands and spoke briefly. The young man pointed up toward one of the houses. Jim and Wally turned on their heels, walking back toward the car where Ronny and I were, still

saying nothing. As they got closer, Ronny opened his door and stood up to greet them.

"We can take him up now, they say," Wally said. "Do you want to go round and get him? We'll all walk up together."

The constable walked round the front of the car and opened my door.

"Right," he said. "We're going up to the house."

"You can talk," I said. "Good to know."

He put his hand over my head as I stepped out the door toward him. We walked back around the front of the Caravelle, meeting up with Jim and Wally on the boulevard.

"Still not going to share what it is we're doing here, huh?" I asked. Nobody answered.

Wally and Jim grabbed an elbow each and began walking me back up the street; Ronny followed immediately behind. The crowd of men standing on the sidewalk parted to let us through.

"They're expecting you at the door," the young man said. He had a fairly strong Dutch accent to his English.

"You should handle the introductions, Mr. McFadden," he added, turning to the Mountie I knew as Jim.

"Pleased to be introduced at last, Detective McFadden," I said. "My name's Douglas Sanderson. My friends call me Sandy."

Jim dropped my elbow and stepped in front of us, ignoring me. Ronny took his place and the four of us continued on our way, the constable and Wally steering

me — tugs to Jim's pilot. We continued along the sidewalk past a large hydrangea, and then turned left onto a stone driveway, edged with an evergreen hedge.

The houses on Riverside are what realtors call exclusive. Far back from the road and sheltered by well-established trees and bushes. Swansea has always been a bedroom community for people from the financial and legal worlds downtown — the ones who thought that Rosedale was too close to the office. Big houses that wear their wealth quietly. A rich man's fantasy of middle-class life. "Comfortable."

We got to the front door, which was guarded by another tall blond man in government-issued "civvies." McFadden showed him his badge and waited while he took down the details in his notebook. We stood in silence. The blond man finished writing, closed his notebook with an elastic, and tucked the pencil inside. Only then, when he was completely finished and the notebook was back in his pocket, did he look back up at us. He turned silently from face to face before returning to look at McFadden.

"You can go in now," he said finally, opening the door for us. He had the same accent and slightly stilted way of speaking as his twin down on the sidewalk.

Inside the house, things were busy and impersonal the way they always are after a major crime. Officials crowded the interior — fingerprint men, detectives, photographers, constables — milling around, talking in groups, using different types of equipment to carry out solitary tasks. They looked out of place — like stagehands preparing the set for a play. Ladders in the bedroom. Workboots in the hall. The fourth wall removed.

"Through here," Jim said, breaking my thoughts and pulling me to the left. We

went through a round archway into a high-ceilinged living room. It was decorated in an expensive modern style: heavy brown shag carpet, oak and leather furniture. A small white pod-style television stood on a plastic pedestal in the corner, like a futuristic flower. A fingerprint man in a heavy black coat and police boots was on his knees beside it, dusting an orange metal fireplace.

We continued through the living room and past some bookcases that stuck out into the middle of the room, forming a divider. In the back, where you'd expect the dining room to be, was what was clearly meant to be a large study. A heavy oak desk stood parallel to the back wall. Behind it, much as in Fitz's office, was a glass window. Sliding, rather than French, doors. The drapes were open, and I could see into a heavily wooded yard. A small bird feeder hung from the eave. A pleasant diversion on a winter's afternoon.

Things were less pleasant on this side of the window. A photographer had set up some flash stands in front of the desk. They popped and hummed as he took photo after photo.

The focus of his attention was on the chair, behind the desk. The body of Van Bergen-Aarts — or what was left of it. The top of his head and most of his face was missing. Blood and gore had splattered across the wall behind him and the ceiling above. He was slumped back in the chair, with his shoulders hanging unnaturally below him, pulled back. I could see a frilly white shirt and plum velour jacket, both caked in congealed blood. Fashionable, even in death.

"Van Bergen-Aarts?" I asked, speaking to nobody in particular.

"In the flesh," Wally answered. Ronny made a frown at the choice of words.

"I thought he'd left for Holland," I said.

"Aye. That's one of the things we want to talk to you about," Wally said, turning to me.

"He *should* be in Holland," Jim added. "It was when he didn't arrive yesterday morning and the airline said he'd missed his flight that the embassy asked us to come round and check up on him."

"And we found him like this," Wally added.

"Do you know what happened?" I asked.

"That's another thing we want to talk to you about," Wally said.

"And it's a lot worse than it looks," Jim added.

He nodded to the photographer, who stepped back. Jim pushed me forward slightly with his hand, steering me around the desk until we were standing behind it, parallel to Van Bergen-Aarts and the chair. The floor looked like the kill room in a slaughterhouse. There was blood everywhere. The consul's lower body was stretched out in the chair. His hips and backside pushed to the end of his seat; his right leg at an odd angle. What looked like a piece of bone was sticking up through a bloody gash in his trouser leg. His arms were pulled behind him, reverse-embracing the back of his chair. An explanation for the odd position of his shoulders. His wrists were bound tightly with what looked like a thin brown extension cord.

"Jesus," I said. I felt bile rising in my throat.

"Tortured before he was killed," Jim said with a technical air. "Tied, kneecapped, and then *bam!* — finished off with a bullet through the roof of his mouth."

He made a pistol with his thumb and index figure, pointing it upward at his mouth.

"Mob style," Wally added, unnecessarily.

"It's not an easy way of killing somebody," Jim continued. "Forcing the gun between their teeth like that. You have to want them to know what's coming."

"And to fear it," Wally said.

We looked on in silence. After a moment Jim nodded for us to step back. The flash stands began to pop and hum again as the photographer returned to work. The four of us stood in a line, watching.

"You might have been the last person to see him alive, Sandy," Jim said, turning to me. "You met with him Thursday, and he's not been seen in public since." It was a statement, not a question.

"Right after you spoke to me, detective," I said. "I was on my way to him when you stopped me for that coffee."

"Why don't you tell us what you talked about," Jim said. "Maybe there's something he said that could help us figure this out."

"There's not much to say," I answered. "He had some private business he wanted to discuss with me and asked if I'd be interested in working for him. But we didn't really come to any conclusions."

"What was the 'private business'?" Jim asked.

"Nothing I could say to you," I answered. "Confidential."

"How did he seem when you left him," Jim asked again, surprising me by not pushing harder against my claim of confidentiality.

"Fine," I said. "He told me he was planning to head home soon to Holland. Seemed happy enough."

"That's not what his secretary says," Wally said, jumping in. "She said he seemed very excited in anticipation of your visit."

"I'd have said he was an excitable man," I said.

"She meant more than normal," Wally pressed on. "'Scared,' she said."

"She told us that he cleared his calendar for you and then asked her and everybody else in the office to leave just after you arrived," Jim added.

"I wasn't aware of that," I answered truthfully. "I figured it was because it was the end of the workday. He asked somebody to make some coffee, so they weren't all gone."

"Soon after," Jim said.

"So what was it ye were talking about," Wally asked. "Yer 'private business'?"

The question sounded like an accusation — like dirty postcards.

"I was wondering when you'd get back to that," I answered. "Not really something I can say."

"Your client's dead," Jim said. "Surely that means there's nothing more to keep private."

"Well, he wasn't really my client," I said. "That was one of the things he wanted to talk about."

"And did you take him on?" Jim asked.

"No," I said. "As I said, we discussed it, but we never really came to a decision."

"So then there's nothing to hide, right?" he asked again.

"I can't get into it, Detective McFadden," I said. "It was private business and I have to leave it at that."

"Did you know he was visited by Kugelman?" Jim asked, changing tack. "Or at least a couple of his boys. A week or so ago."

"You're the ones keeping an eye on him," I answered. "And on me."

"That's right," he said matter-of-factly. "He met with the same guys you met with the day after McCrae was murdered. Jimmy Bondi and little Joey Benvenuti."

"And Kugelman," Wally added.

"I'm sure Mr. Kugelman has what they used to call 'a wide correspondence,'" I said. "I bet we're not the only people to have met with him recently."

"No. But this poor bugger's the only one we know who's dead," Wally said.

"If you say so," I answered.

"So ye know of somebody else, then?" Wally asked quickly in reply.

"Don't be stupid, Wally," I said. "Jim here and his buddies have been following me around, following Kugelman around, following Van Bergen-Aarts around — probably following you around as well. If there are any other bodies, they know where they are, not me. I just happen to have had the bad luck to have met up with this body last week."

"This isn't the first time that's happened to ye, now is it, Sandy?" Wally asked. "You had a long meeting with Mr. McCrae the night he died as well, didn't ye?"

"Well, first of all, I don't know that I met with Van Bergen-Aarts the night he was killed. All I know is that he's dead now, here, and that he told me last week that he was going to fly out to Holland soon. I'd expected to see him at the funeral on the

weekend. So maybe it was last Thursday night, maybe it was Friday, maybe it was Saturday, or even last night or this morning.”

“It wasn’t this morning,” Jim answered. “We think he was killed on Friday.”

“Whatever you say,” I said. “The point is that I wouldn’t know.”

“But ye were at a meeting — with the victim — the night Mr. McCrae was killed as well, now wern’ ye?”

“You know I was, Wally. You called me in the next morning. But I don’t see the connection to this.”

“Well, they’re both dead,” Jim said. “That’s one connection.”

“And Van Bergen-Aarts was with ye at your meeting with Mr. McCrae the night he was killed,” Wally added.

“That’s another.”

“And then we’ve got you on film taking a big wad of cash from Kugelman the next day,” Jim said. “When you went to visit him at the Bagel.”

“That’s a third.”

“If you know Kugelman paid me, Jim,” I answered, “then you probably also know why he gave it to me: he wanted to find out more about what I knew about Fitz’s business and to tell me some cockamamie story about Fitz being a black-marketeer in the war.

“So you’re back down to two connections. Not very good ones.”

“That’s what Kugelman said in the restaurant,” Jim said. “But what about on your little stroll after that?”

At this point, I wasn’t sure what to answer. Clearly Jim and his friends were

doing more than simply following a few of us around. Film, microphones, hidden cameras. Spying on Marty. This was something much bigger. Spy vs. Spy. Commies and Coups. Or something big with the mob. Much more than what may or may not have happened after the war. I realized that Kugelman must have known they were keeping an eye on us. It's why he wanted us to go for our walk — keep away from bugs. But he had Moe pay me inside the restaurant. For the cameras? To create the impression I was working for him?

"There's nothing to say," I answered. "Kugelman wanted to know more about how things were at the end of the war, and he wanted to stretch his legs. Since he was paying so well for my time, I thought there was no harm in going along."

"And now Van Bergen-Aarts is dead," Jim said.

"And now Van Bergen-Aarts is dead," I agreed.

We fell silent.

The photographer finished taking photographs and started to disassemble his equipment. Some men from the coroner's office had arrived and were standing behind us. They were waiting for the room to clear so they could remove the body.

"Remind me not to take any late meetings with you, Sandy," Jim said. "They never seem to end well, do they?"

Chapter 52

Wally and Jim dropped me off at the Temple on their way back to headquarters. Meaning they either knew I hadn't killed Van Bergen-Aarts or they had nothing they could use against me. Probably they just wanted to shake me up. Throw me off balance. Find out what I knew. The cop way of asking for help.

Ronny was driving east on Richmond when he pulled over across the street from the Temple — parallel to the curb this time — and let me out. I waited for a break in the traffic and then ran across and up the Richmond stairs. It was just after 2 p.m. when I entered the office. Nymphaea looked up. Startled. Grateful.

"There you are," she said. "I was starting to get worried."

I told her about my experience with Wally and Jim. And of course Van Bergen-Aarts.

"How awful," she said. "Mr. Van Bergen-Aarts was a hard man to like, but this is truly terrible."

When I hadn't shown up this morning, Nymphaea had tried calling me at home. And then she'd tried Edie. She had been about to send one of the streetmen round to my apartment to see if I was alive when I came through the door. She was still recovering from the worry.

"I've cancelled all your meetings for the day," she said. "In fact, I was about to start on Tuesday's. I told people you'd been called away suddenly for an emergency."

We decided that we'd keep the schedule tomorrow as it was but also that we wouldn't try to rebook anything today. I could use the afternoon to think.

Nymphea clucked at me.

"I was a lot less worried than you were, Miss Athanasopoulos," I said. "I knew who had taken me and where they had brought me. It was more a bother than anything to be scared about."

Nymphea fussed over me some more before she let me return to my desk. She came in a few minutes later bringing a tray with coffee and tea biscuits.

"I don't know how you think you can work for the rest of the day," she said. "But maybe this will help."

I took the tray and assured her again that I was all right. She continued to hover, looking worried. I asked her to close the door as she left.

"Don't put any calls through for a couple of hours," I said. "While it wasn't nearly as bad as you say, I need to do some thinking on my own to see what it all means."

The first of this thinking was going to have to be my relationship to Kugelman. Was I working for him or not? Twice now in the last week I'd had to tiptoe around my dealings with him — once with Van Bergen-Aarts and once, now that Van Bergen-Aarts was dead, with Jim and Wally. I'd been loyal to him because he'd given me money to meet with him. He wasn't a client exactly, but he also wasn't just some schmuck on the street I'd never met before. And as I've said, you don't get ahead in this business if you talk about what people tell you. Well, more than I seem to, anyway.

But it's also a principle. When people talk to me, they are never discussing

things they'd like to see in the newspaper — or passed on to the police. It's always something sad, something they want to keep hidden, or something illegal. Like I said to Van Bergen-Aarts when he'd asked me about whether I was working for Kugelman: the easiest thing is just to have a rule that I don't discuss anything a client brings to me.

But what if you begin to suspect that you're being used? It was a principle, not a blood oath. Private dicks don't have the same kind of legal obligation to keep their mouths shut that lawyers do. Or priests. And we don't have the same kind of protection lawyers and priests have if the cops think we know something.

What was clear was that my association with Kugelman was starting to get me into trouble — and maybe had got both Fitz and Van Bergen-Aarts killed. At a certain point, you need to ask yourself whether you're protecting a client's business or being used to further it. Kugelman had paid me big to come meet with him when he didn't have to pay me anything. When I showed up at the Bagel, he treated me to a monologue about Fitz's doubtful history as a black-marketeer. But having made a show of having Moe give me all that money, he never actually asked me to do anything.

I'd been treating it all as a well-paying joke, figuring that Kugelman was rich enough to be able to afford his eccentricities. But what if it was serious? What if he was setting me up? Paying me in advance, in case he needed me to take the fall later on. And here I am, keeping my business with him secret — first from Van Bergen-Aarts and later from the cops.

Not that I was doing that great a job. It was clear that the Horsemen were all

over this. Jim said that they had me “on film” in the Bagel; earlier on he’d shown he knew something about my conversations with Marty. And like Marty had said, it was clear that these were political cops, not criminal. Jim and “Bill” were not trying to figure out whether I was working with Kugelman to smuggle girls or cigarettes across the border. Or even whether Fitz had been in the black market during the war. They were after much bigger fish. Something now. Something that had been kicked up by the news of those executions during the war but that was also far more important.

But at the same time, you couldn’t discount what Marty had said about the generational thing, either. That this was also all about not wanting to talk about the war. The Beck and Dorfer story brought up a lot of bad memories — for me, for Fitz, for Greta, Freddie, Thackery. Even the Chief and Hellyer seemed to want nothing more than for the story to go away.

I often wonder about that as I go about my daily business. What it means that everybody in their forties, fifties, and even sixties has this shared experience they are hoping not to remember. This horrible shared experience. Every man you meet was in it — either overseas or conscripted at home. Every woman was caught up in the war effort, or worrying about somebody who was. And that’s before you even start talking about the people who came here after the war: the DPs, the Jews, the POWs, guerrillas. Damaged people. People who killed. Who saw people be killed. Who were told to do terrible things. Who told others to do even worse things.

And on it goes. Even the kids in their twenties and thirties are still living the war — our war as well as theirs. Like Marty, whose dad never recovered from Dieppe.

Or Tini, who lived with her mother's sadness about a lost friend from the last days of madness. I wonder sometimes if it's not actually the same war — that the protests against Vietnam are not also a protest against our war. "Not again," the kids seem to be saying. "Not again. We cannot allow another generation to be trained to kill, and burn, and maim, to be warped like our parents." It's why the protests are as fierce up here as they are down in the States. I mean, we're not even in Vietnam and the kids are angry about it.

Of course we try to keep quiet about it. For us, the war is both the only thing we talk about and the one thing we don't. It was the greatest thing that happened to most of us. Those Old Seaforths out west — the captains out in Alberta and Vancouver who remembered arranging the trucks and guns for Dorfer and Beck: what are they now? A farmer, a businessman, and a lawyer — sowing seed, making sales, reviewing contracts.

But then? Then they were *Captains*. Officers. Twenty-five- or thirty-year-olds whose words could send other men to their deaths, destroy a village, protect women and children... or not.

And prey. They were also prey. We were also prey. The Germans were shooting at us. Trying to kill us.

For two years not a day went by without the threat of death — longer if you figure they were also trying to bomb us in Aldershot. And not a day went by when I didn't see somebody they *had* managed to kill. Or maim. Bodies — torn, ripped, bloody. Or body parts — a hand, a foot, a finger, part of a head. Shredded by shrapnel or burned to the bone. And the smell, everywhere: like blood-soaked

butcher paper that's sat too long in the garbage bin. Rot. Every day. Everywhere.

How do you forget that? How do you forget it when you come home? Or when you go back to school? The factory? The farm? And now that we've got the DPs and the POWs who've come back to Canada to settle... How are we supposed to live together here in peace? How do you bag groceries for a man who once tried to kill you? Hold the door for a widow who wrote love letters to an SS officer?

But of course we do. Because we're no longer Captains, Sergeants, and Privates. Or Oberleutnants, Korporallen, and Mattressen. Or WAAFs, WAAVs, and CWACs. Hilferinnen. Now we're bank clerks, and barbers, and taxi drivers. And lawyers, and diplomats, and politicians. And generals. And widows. And private eyes. And every single one of us — every single adult you meet, every adult between the ages of, say, forty and sixty, or even seventy or eighty if you count the first war — has this secret inside them. The secret of what it felt like and smelled like and looked like to be in the Highlanders, and the Seaforths, and the Hasty Ps. And the Hermann Göring division. And the Luftwaffe. And the Red Army. And Bergen-Belsen. And Auschwitz.

Sometimes, when you let your hair down at the end of the day, among your own kind, you might trade a careful war story — like Archie with his “terrible show” at Mons, or even Van Bergen-Aarts and his tale of Van der Waals and Achterberg. But you only do it among friends and only with those who were there.

And even then, you keep it light. You talk about the “boys,” and the “Old Man,” and the regimental rivalries. Nothing about the burned bodies and the screams and the smells. Or about the young men — the teenagers — calling for their mamas.

Asking you not to shoot. Or, if they were hurt bad enough, asking you to *please* shoot.

And now they say, "Don't trust anybody over thirty."

So it makes sense that we don't want to hear about Beck and Dorfer. That we don't want to hear how we "let" the Germans kill these men because it was convenient, or because somebody was trying to win a bureaucratic fight. It makes sense that the newspapers and the army and the Mounties and the government and the opposition all want this story to go away. To keep the memories down. Under control. We have told ourselves a tale about what we did in those days and how we survived. Who we were and what it was we had to live through. And to challenge that story — to say that it was meaningless; to remind people that it was cruel.... Well, I can see why Hellyer might want to claim nothing happened; why Diefenbaker might not want to challenge that lie; and why the reporters and politicians might want to agree that everything's fine despite what they heard from a couple of farmers out west. Maybe this is all really about keeping our sanity. Keeping the memories hidden. Holding our heads high.

But that brings us back to the deaths. Fitz didn't have to die to keep this news hidden. And Van Bergen-Aarts did not seem haunted by his experiences in the war. Far from it: he was proud of what he did and thought it was the beginning of the current war.

And Kugelman, yet again. The one man I know who had not been in the war, as he tells the story. But for whom, like Van Bergen-Aarts, and maybe Fitz, the last war was really the beginning of the next.

I suppose it's not impossible that Fitz or Van Bergen-Aarts could have been killed by "the Israelis" as part of some transnational revenge for their war of independence. Or because Van Bergen-Aarts was right and this is actually a "hot" part of the Cold War — a game of finding and eliminating spies and double agents that we've been playing with the Soviets since Gouzenko first tried to catch the Mounties' attention in '45.

But it seems pretty unlikely to me. Bureaucracies don't hate. And this was hate. McCrae too. The Israelis put Eichmann on trial. They didn't pull a cord halfway through his neck in an office somewhere so they could feel him die. Governments and armies are too efficient for that kind of theatrics. Or too bureaucratic. This was personal.

So anger, greed, or jealousy. The ABCs of motive.

I found it hard to think of Kugelman as being that angry or jealous. He was a businessman. But I could see him wanting to send a message to protect his business. Van Bergen-Aarts certainly thought a message was being sent. And Kugelman was what tied us together. He was the one who claimed to have a secret over Fitz. He was the one who'd terrified Van Bergen-Aarts. He was the one who followed me and then framed me at the Bagel. It was his guys, I thought, who were probably the voices that had worried Greta at the beginning of this and started everything in motion.

So it was Kugelman who Wally and Jim should be looking at, not me. And it was Kugelman I should be looking at as well. The route to whoever had killed Fitz went through Kugelman. And I guess the route to whoever had killed Van Bergen-Aarts

as well, though that didn't concern me as much. I wasn't sure what I could actually do about it, since despite what you read in novels, private eyes really are more in the business of catching shoplifters and fraudsters than murderers — loss reduction rather than justice. But if there was anything that could be done, it was going to be via Kugelman.

I walked over to the credenza and got out my office gun, a snub-nosed Commando I'd bought off an American in Holland right after the war. The Commando is a smaller version of the police special they use in the States. They gave out dozens of them to OSS men in the war, and they were reliable little things: .38 special with a two-inch barrel. The shells are almost as long as the barrel, but it's still a much better gun than the Model 10 our guys carried. The Commando's a revolver, but it fits easily under your arm. It's not something you'd set out to kill somebody with, but it's a quick draw and dangerous up close. Something you point rather than aim. The gun you'd bring to a knife fight.

I took off my jacket, loaded the cylinder, spun it to make sure it ran free, and then strapped on my shoulder holster. Put my jacket back on and walked over to the mirror to check the lines were straight. I wasn't sure what I was going to do next, but whatever it was, I thought I better do it armed. I used to think that Kugelman was just fooling around — a comic book mobster. But if I was right and he'd done for Fitz and Van Bergen-Aarts, then he was a dangerous man. He'd killed two of the three men who seemed to know the most about what happened to Van der Waals — and of course, also what happened to Beck and Dorfer — and I was the third who knew. He'd let me go the first time. But after Van Bergen-Aarts,

he might see me as a loose thread — something that needed to be cut to stop the rest of the cloth from fraying.

Chapter 53

As worried as I was, nothing actually happened for the next month. Kugelman didn't come to get me and I didn't go and get him.

In fact, the whole thing became kind of a Mexican standoff — I watched Kugelman; Kugelman watched me; and the Mounties, I assume, watched everybody. I wasn't sure what we all thought might happen — and I still didn't know why Jim and "Bill" were interested in any of this. But it was clear that everybody was waiting for somebody else to make the first move. Bondi and the guy I'd learned to call "little Joey" occasionally showed up to follow me around, but they kept their distance and drove on whenever I stopped the car. I never did see the tail the Mounties had put on me. But I knew it was there.

Meanwhile, life went on. The Leafs continued their winning streak, taking seven of the next eight games, including seven in a row before tying Montreal at the beginning of March. Boston, New York, Boston, New York again, Montreal. They even beat Chicago, who were miles ahead of anybody at this point. By the time they finally lost again — the return match against Chicago on March 5 — they'd made it back up to third place, a game behind New York, but with one extra to play in the season.

That sounds a lot better than it actually is. By this time in the season, there was no way anybody was going to catch Chicago. Bobby Hull, Stan Mikita, and the rest of the Black Hawks were twenty points up on the best of everybody else. With a

dozen or so games left, they were unbeatable.

The real question was who came next: second, third, and fourth. Come in fifth or sixth and you were out of the playoffs. But first through fourth went on to the semifinals, leaving you with a shot at the Cup.

The problem was that there were four teams who had a shot for those three places. Boston was going to end up last. Even with Bobby Orr, they'd had a hard time winning and by this point in the season were as far behind as Chicago was ahead. But beyond that it was anybody's guess: New York, Toronto, Montreal, and Detroit. They were all bunched up in the middle within a game or two of each other — and yet only three of them were going to make the playoffs. A couple of wins or losses either way and you could easily rise to second or fall to fifth.

But if fifth was the worst because you were out, then third place was second worst. The way the semifinals are structured, the second-place team plays the fourth-place, and the third-place team faces the first — that is, Chicago. End up in second or fourth and you play a team much like yourself. A team that, if a couple of games had gone the other way, might have been in your place.

Third-place, though, had to play a team that seemed unbeatable. I couldn't see anybody taking more than a game from Chicago, and certainly not the Leafs, who choked whenever the stakes were high. If we ended up in third, we were pretty much out of it. Coming in third was like coming in fifth, with just a couple of extra games before you broke to work on the farm for the summer.

The result was that the past month had been pretty exciting. The Kerr sisters came over pretty much every Saturday to catch the game on my colour TV: two

wins against Chicago, a tie and a win against New York, a win against Boston.

"I thought for sure we were through after Chicago," Edie said to me the week after a Wednesday loss to Montreal. "But now I'm not so sure."

"I still think we're going to do it, Mrs. McNeill," I answered. "It's just a question of who we'll end up with. At this point it could be anybody."

"It could be anybody," Edie agreed.

The next day was Sunday, the last game of the season. Leafs in Boston. I was going to try to catch the game on the radio, but I'd agreed to visit with Greta first. It had been about six weeks since Van Bergen-Aarts had been found dead. With the new murder, Freddie had agreed to stay on another couple of weeks, till the middle of March. Greta had called me then, hoping to catch up.

"How are you doing, Greta?" I asked when she had first called, the weekend after Wally and Jim had taken me out to Riverside.

"Have you heard about Dirk?" she asked, getting straight to the point. Even before this business, Greta had not been one for small talk.

"Yes," I answered. "The police picked me up and drove me out there the day they found him. It wasn't a pretty sight."

"How terrible," she said. "It was all that Freddie and I could talk about before she left."

"So you're on your own now?"

"I've got Ida, of course," Greta said. "And Tini has told me that she'll come home after her classes end in a couple of weeks."

"She's doing all right?" I asked.

"Well, she's as shocked as I am," Greta said. "But she's also been a great support to me ever since Fitz died."

We agreed that we should meet up as soon as we could, which is why I found myself once again in the sewing room at Orangefield. Greta sat on the same couch that she had last time, and Ida came in once again with tea for Greta and coffee for me on a silver tray.

"I didn't bother asking this time," she said, putting the tray down on the table. "But if you want something else, please let me know."

"This is fine," Greta answered. "But, please, Ida, why don't you join us?"

Ida made some noises about having things to take care of in the kitchen, but Greta insisted, and ultimately she agreed to sit with us. She joined Greta on the couch, sitting where Freddie had the previous time.

Greta asked me if I knew anything about the Van Bergen-Aarts murder that wasn't in the papers. So I told her the story of my trip out to Swansea.

"It looked like a mob hit to me," I told them. "And I think that Wally and McFadden from the RCMP thought so as well — though they'd have taken a confession from me if I'd given them one. There's a lot of pressure to solve it: Dirk's place was completely full of cops: city, Mountie, and a couple from what I guess was the Dutch Embassy. Young soldier types."

"You'd imagine the Hollands government was involved," Greta answered. "Dirk was a diplomat, after all."

"Well, more than that, I think," I answered. "He was also something to do with spies and that sort of thing, I think. At least after the war."

“Yes, after the war,” Greta said. “Here we are, you, me, and Ida. Grown older without ever being young. All because of the war. It never leaves us.”

“Why do you think they wanted Mr. Van Bergen-Aarts dead, Sandy?” Ida asked. “Why would a gangster want to kill him?”

I told them about my conversation with Kugelman and Van Bergen-Aarts’s reaction when he found out about it.

“I don’t know why they’d want to kill him,” I said. “But it was clear that he was very worried about it. Even leaving aside the whole ‘Eichmann in Argentina’ aspect, it was clear he thought that Kugelman or somebody associated with him wanted him dead. It’s why he was going back to Holland.”

“But why?” Ida asked again. “It doesn’t make sense. All the things that he said that Mr. McCrae and he did. They were so long ago. And so far away. Why would somebody want to kill him now?”

“I think that none of this is far away,” Greta answered. “And it never goes away. You look around in the street and all you see is hate. Or at least that is all that I see. What we did in those days, it can never be forgiven. I can never forgive it.”

We fell silent. Greta had spoken with a passion I’d never heard from her — not even right after the war, when I’d first interviewed her.

“Well, if what Kugelman was telling me was right, *this* wasn’t about the war, Greta,” I said after a moment. “Or at least not about ours. This was World War Three, not World War Two: the Cold War; the Russians; East Germans; the *Spy Who Came in from the Cold* — that kind of thing. That’s why the Mounties are so involved. I can’t quite figure out what it is they’re scared of, but they are definitely

worried. There's more than a whiff of Profumo about it."

I blushed suddenly, realizing that affairs involving commies were not the best topic to bring up with Greta. This whole business had started with her wondering what Fitz had been up to.

"Or Maclean and Philby," I added, tacking to safer territory.

We fell silent again. After a moment, Ida stood up, saying that she really had to get to the kitchen. Greta and I watched her leave.

"I was a communist, Sendie," Greta said, turning to me after Ida had closed the door. "You know that. Fitz knew that. Everybody knew that. We all were. I am not ashamed of this."

I looked at her, saying nothing.

"What I am ashamed of," she continued, "is what I discover now that Fitz and Dirk were up to. Helping war criminals. *Fouten*. Collaborators. This Van der Waals. *That* is shameful and unforgivable. How could Fitz have helped somebody like Van der Waals escape — a Nazi. Somebody who tricked and killed us. Who fought against you. And Rainer? How could Fitz have killed Rainer? Save the bad and kill the good. How is this possible? This is not the Fitz I knew. Or married."

"Fitz didn't kill Beck or Dorfer, Greta," I answered quickly, trying to comfort. "That really was an accident. The Seaforths got the wrong idea, is what I think. Maybe Fitz and Dirk shouldn't have been helping Van der Waals. But what happened to Rainer and Bruno was an accident. A SNAFU, like we used to say. It happened all the time in those days."

Greta was sitting at the edge of the couch closest to my chair. Her hands were

on her knees. I reached out and put my hand on hers.

"Fitz thought he was doing the right thing," I continued.

"He killed them, Sendie," Greta said slowly. With determination. "Fitz killed them. And Dirk. The two of them — Rainer and the Dorfer boy. And why? Because they wanted to start a new war before the last one was even finished? How can they expect me to forgive them for that?"

I was taken aback. There was fury in her voice. Contained but angry. I didn't know what to say. This case had started with Greta worried about her husband, and it had ended, it seems, with her hating him. Not something to chalk up in the win column.

Greta took a few moments to compose herself. When she spoke again, the anger was gone.

"Well, these are the things that we must live with," she said. "And I'm sorry because I know Fitz was your friend as well as my husband."

The visit was over. Greta stood up.

"Let me walk you to the door," she said, reaching out for my hand. "You've been a good friend to me. To Freddie and to me. Very much thank you."

We walked up the stairs and stopped at the front door. Ida appeared with my coat.

They looked at me as I put it on.

"Thank you, Greta," I said. "You know that you can always rely on me." I felt self-conscious, weak.

"I do," Greta said, squaring herself in front of me. She placed her hands on my

shoulders and lifted herself slightly toward me: a farewell kiss. I nodded my head slightly forward and to the left, presenting my right cheek. Greta turned her head right rather than left, placing a kiss against the corner of my mouth.

"You're a good man, Sendie," she said softly, moving her head back slightly. "You're a good man."

She leaned back in and gave me a second kiss, directly on my lips this time. My face grew warm; the hair on my head felt like it had been rubbed against the grain. My breath caught.

Greta stepped back, looked up at me, and smiled.

"You always know the right thing to do," she said. "I can always count on you."

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Ida open the door and take a step to the side, holding my hat.

"Let me know if there's anything else I can do," I said, turning toward the street. Ida handed me my hat. I put it on as I left. The door closed immediately behind me.

I took a second to catch my breath, then continued on to the street.

Chapter 54

The Leafs beat Boston that night and ended up in third-place after all — so things weren't looking that good despite the win. They were going to be fed to the Black Hawks.

When the playoffs started, the first game of the series was in Chicago. And it went more or less as badly as you might guess: the Leafs haven't beaten Chicago at home this year — or won a playoff game anywhere in two years; they fought hard but just weren't a match for Bobby Hull and his band of all-stars.

The first period was the roughest: Horton and Esposito got into it a few times, and were sent off once for fighting. Stapleton got a ten-minute misconduct. Pulford got a double minor for tripping and roughing.

Chicago was the better team, but they weren't able to run away with it. They scored early in the first on the power play, when Mikita went around the net, pushed it out to Stapleton, who went cross-ice to Wharram. "He shoots, he scores," as Hewitt might say.

The Leafs got it back a couple of minutes later: Keon to Mahovlich. But from then on it was Chicago. Their second goal came toward the end of the first period, when Hull knocked Sawchuk over just as Wharram wound up at the point. And then again at the beginning of the third, when Horton knocked a pass into his own net. A fourth came when Mikita poked in a rebound, and a fifth, from a long shot from the point by Agnotti at about the seven-minute mark.

By the time they'd got to the third period, Chicago knew they had it: they kept Hull and Mikita off, saving them for Game Two, and they let the second-stringers run the ice. But even against the B team, there wasn't much the Leafs could do, hacking away at them for twenty minutes without much effect before saving face with a final goal in the last couple of seconds: something weak from Pappin that somehow went over De Jordy's shoulder.

The second game of the series was on Sunday night — a Leafs win! After being badly outplayed, the heels of Game One decided to rescue their reputations. Horton was a pile hammer, smashing the Hawks every time they tried to set up in the Leafs' end, and Sawchuk decided to fight for every puck that made it through. The Leafs got two in the first, and then a third in the second period. Nothing particularly exciting, just hard work around the crease, digging for pucks and taking advantage of anything that came up. The Hawks started out strong but just couldn't get anything past the Leafs' goalie, until the third when Mikita let loose a floater that seemed to take Sawchuk by surprise.

With the win in Chicago, the Leafs took the momentum: the series was tied, but Chicago no longer had the extra game at home.

The third game was a pair with the second, except Sawchuk was even better. The Hawks threw everything at him and he stopped it all — except once again for a late distraction in the third, when Hull managed to get something behind him. The Leafs opened the scoring in the first, and then got two more in the second, through hard work more than artistry: Ellis bounced the first goal off Hall's left pad; and Stemkowski pushed the third under the Hawk's goalie when he dropped the

rebound off a shot from Pulford. Only the second goal, when Mahovlich came out of nowhere to redirect a pass from Walton, showed anything to do with skill rather than doggedness.

Chicago evened things up again in Game Four, regaining the home-ice advantage. This was a game that could have gone either way. Chicago scored off the opening faceoff — nine seconds, tying a record — and then things went back and forth all night: Toronto Chicago, Toronto, Chicago, right through into the third when Chicago got two in a row and Toronto only answered one.

The Leafs lost, but it was a really great game.

Chapter 55

Edie stopped me as I was heading out to work the next morning.

“Mr. Sanderson!” she called as I pulled my door closed. “Please tell me we can come over Saturday to watch the game. I don’t think Mabel has been this excited since we were in high school.”

“Well, as long as she promises not to break anything, Mrs. McNeill. You know how she is when things start getting close.”

“Let’s hope it doesn’t. They took one in Chicago. I’m sure they can take another.”

“I think that’s too much to hope for,” I answered. “But I could see them going to seven on this.”

“Oh, I think they’ll take it in six. I think they’re going to take the next two.”

“Chicago, you mean?”

“Do not be obtuse, Mr. Sanderson,” Edie answered. “We are going to win it all this year. Just you wait and see.”

I headed down the stairs and out onto the street. *What a couple of wins can do to a girl*, I thought.

Chapter 56

In the end, it turned out that Edie was right and I was wrong about the next couple of games. She and Mabel came over the next evening to watch the game in Chicago: an outstanding one that the Leafs took 4-2. Sawchuk played the best game of his life — almost knocked out by a Bobby Hull special in the second, he came back to stop the Hawks over and over again. Horton, Pronovost, and Hillman were like a wall — if a wall could then jump out every so often and hammer somebody into the boards. At the other end of the ice, Keon, the Big M, Stemkowski, and Pappin were knocking them in from every corner.

When the final whistle blew, Mabel jumped up and let out a yelp. I almost dropped my beer.

“What a game!” she yelled. “What a game!”

Edie started to laugh. Mabel looked around and then sat down again sheepishly.

“That was something else, Miss Kerr,” I agreed.

“Do you think they’ll win the next game too, Mr. Sanderson?” she asked. It was the longest conversation I’d had with her since I moved to the building.

“I guess we’ll see,” I answered.

“Of course they will, Mabs,” Edie said, butting in. “I’ve been telling Mr. Sanderson for weeks that we were on the right path. A loss here or there is nothing to worry about if you’ve got the main direction right!”

I asked the girls if they’d like another drink. Normally they’d head home right

after the game, but this evening they were having a celebration. Mabel admitted that she'd enjoy another shandy, and Edie called for a beer. I turned off the TV. We drank in silence.

"Well, thank you very much, Mr. Sanderson," Edie said when she finished her drink. "Montreal, here we come."

Chapter 57

Edie was right. The Leafs took the next game, Tuesday night, 3-1. At home.

It was a different team that took the ice this time. On both sides. Chicago came on looking like they expected to lose: they were hesitant, they hung back, they hacked and slashed. Toronto, for their part, was playing like they were destined to win. Lots of passing, good position, sharing the puck around. They were the stronger team, and they knew it. And Chicago knew it too.

The stars of the game, other than Sawchuk, of course, were Connacher and Stemkowski — both of them rookies. Neither is flashy, in the way the Big M or Bobby Hull is. But both of them are hard workers.

Beddoes had it right the next day in the *Globe*: a team that everybody had said wouldn't last five games against Chicago had taken them in six — and after having lost every game they played in Chicago this season, they took two out of three on the road in the first round of the playoffs. You just can't predict how things are going to work out in the end.

Chapter 58

The end of the Chicago series marked a turning point in my business with Kugelman and the cops as well. It was as if everybody had been waiting to see which way things would break before anybody made a move.

But suddenly, things were on the run.

It started with the Horsemen. Jim had told me a couple of times that they were watching me. And even though I couldn't see the tail, I had no doubt they were. They knew too much about my movements and who I'd seen and what I'd done. But there were also some strange gaps — like thinking that I was talking to Thackery as well as Marty back in the fall. Or wondering if I'd been out to Riverside when Van Bergen-Aarts was killed, when a solid tail would have known better. I couldn't quite figure out what they were doing: I'd expect them to know more if they were bugging me, but to know less if all they were doing was following me around.

The first play came on Wednesday, the day after the Leafs took the series. I was going up the Bay stairs to the Temple Building as usual when Jim called out to me. He was standing where Greta had been, six months ago — the day before Conacher opened the season with his goal at 38 seconds.

"Sandy!" McFadden called out, stepping toward me, more or less the same way Greta had then. "I need to talk to you."

"Then let's go up to my office this time, Jim," I said. "Last time you kidnapped me off the street you damn near gave Nymphaea a heart attack."

"I'll send Bill upstairs to let her know you're helping us out," Jim said. "But we'd really like you to come with us for this chat. It might save your life."

I didn't feel like I had much of a choice, so I stepped up the last couple of stairs and stood beside him. We didn't kiss, European or any other style. He motioned across the lobby to the Richmond door. I saw "Bill" emerge from the shadow where he'd been waiting for me.

"Bill," Jim said when he got close. "Go up to Sandy's office and tell his secretary that he's with us for the morning."

"And that you promise to bring me back for lunch," I added hopefully.

"And that she should cancel his day for him," Jim said, shutting the idea down.

Bill turned on his heel and headed over to the elevators. "We can wait here," Jim said. "Or we can step over to Flytes. Your call."

I chose Flytes, but it was clear that Jim really was saving whatever it was he had on me for when we made it to HQ.

"Hear the game last night, Sandy?" he asked as soon as we were seated. "I never thought they'd do it."

"You and nobody else," I said. "I don't think anybody thought they'd take more than one from them."

"It's a lot like our kind of work," he said, pointing back and forth between us. "You win in the end by getting the basics right..."

"Knocking guys down, getting up from a fight, and shooting the second you can," I added, jumping on him. "Yeah, I noticed the similarities too. What about kidnapping?" I asked. "How does that fit into the playoffs? You think Montreal will

try to grab Sawchuk off the street and tell Punch he's not needed for the day?"

Bill arrived at our table before Jim could answer me.

"Your Miss A says she'll cancel the morning for you," he said to me as he arrived. "We're to call her before lunch if we need you any longer than that."

"I didn't think Nymphaea was going to let you have me for the whole day," I said. "Not after the last time."

Jim was on his feet by this time, wallet in hand.

"My treat," he said, throwing a dollar bill on the table. "Keep the change!" he said over my shoulder, presumably to Marge.

And to me: "Right, let's go. We've got plenty more coffee at the station."

We headed out of Flytes but went across the lobby to the Richmond stairs rather than straight out onto Bay. An unmarked Caravelle was standing, stopped illegally, across the sidewalk, facing traffic. There was a uniform sitting in the driver's seat.

"Mixed messages, Jim," I said. "Crosswalk or jaywalk. Unis or civvies. With traffic or against. Gotta make up your mind."

"I'll raise it with the boss," Jim answered, opening the door for me. "In the meantime, watch your head."

Bill went round the back of the car and got in the street-side back door, next to me. Jim went round the front and sat in the front right. Privilege of rank. The light turned red at Bay, giving the driver a break in traffic to head across to the eastbound lanes. We turned left on Bay and headed north. Nobody said anything.

Chapter 59

We turned left again on Queen and headed over to the new RCMP headquarters on Sullivan.

Since the war, O-Division HQ had been located in the Beverley Street Barracks, which is a rather plain-sounding name for what was in fact a gorgeous property — Chudleigh, or the Beardmore Mansion, an 1880s-or-so castle at Beverley and Dundas.

This had been the Italian consulate before it was expropriated by the government during the war as alien property. It was handed over to the RCMP's Security Division, who used it as their headquarters until they were forced to give it back about five years ago.

After plans for a huge new complex out in Markham fell through, the Horsemen were forced to scramble to find somewhere to put themselves. They bought an old stamp factory on the south side of Sullivan Street to house the single men, and then gradually took over the neighbouring row houses. By this point, they were installed in pretty much the entire first block, from Beverley to Huron.

We pulled up beside a rundown-looking shack beside the rubber factory. Jim got out, pulling the door open for Bill as he came round to get me. He opened my door, holding his hand over my head as I got out. He took me by the elbow and walked me round to where Bill was waiting. The uniformed constable got out as well. He stood at the driver-side door, waiting for instructions.

"That's enough for now, corporal," Jim said, turning to the car. "Leave the car here and throw me the keys. We'll call you if we need you."

Jim grabbed me by the elbow again and walked up to the steps to the front porch of 13 Sullivan. He pulled open the door and we walked in. The interior was just like any other semi-detached row house in this part of the city. To our left was the old parlour, converted into an administrative office, with a desk barring the entrance. To the right a rickety staircase heading up to where the bedrooms would have been. A hallway continued in front of us. When it had been a house, it would have ended up in a kitchen. Presumably it was now additional offices.

A young woman was sitting at the desk in the parlour doorway, secretary-cum-receptionist. She stopped typing as we came in.

"We'll be up in 2, Lisa," Jim said. "Any messages?"

Lisa shook her head, saying nothing. Jim nudged me toward the stairs and Lisa resumed her typing.

When we got to the top of the stairs, we turned left. Each door on this floor had a number: Room 1 was directly over the entrance, Room 2 beside that. Bill opened the door and ushered me in. Jim followed, closing the door behind us.

Room 2 had originally been a bedroom, of course, and it looked like requisitioned and repurposed space everywhere. The walls had been painted a government green, and the floor had been covered with what was by now a filthy grey carpet. There were two gunmetal-grey desks in the room, one across from the door, the other with its back to the front window. An old-fashioned Bakelite telephone with a cloth-covered line stood on the desk by the window. A dirty black

track on the carpet broke into tributaries that headed around each desk. A single grey steel chair stood between them, slightly in front.

"I'm guessing that's for me," I said, pointing to the grey chair.

"Pretty much," Jim said. He let go of my elbow and walked to the desk in front of the window. Bill broke to the left and headed to the desk against the inside wall. They both sat down. Bill took out a cigarette and a lighter, making a big show of lighting up. An overfull ashtray stood in front of him on the desk. The room smelled of stale smoke.

"Thinking of taking a seat?" Jim asked, looking at me. I'd fallen into a reverie watching Bill and hadn't moved.

"Yeah. Sorry," I mumbled and sat down.

I don't know if it was deliberate or not, but the positioning of the desks made things difficult for the person in the visitor's chair. You basically had three choices: face one desk, face the other, or turn your chair forty-five degrees to not quite face both. Nothing seemed right. If you faced one desk, then the other was over your shoulder. If you set yourself up between them, you were staring at the corner. I decided to compromise: I turned to face Jim as the senior officer, but at a slight angle, so that I wasn't talking entirely over my shoulder to Bill.

Jim jumped right in.

"We think Kugelman's about to take a poke at ya," he said without any introduction.

"Maybe a bit under the weather," I said. "But nothing a good night's sleep won't fix. Thanks for asking. How are you?"

"Quit joking around, Sanderson." It was Bill this time. "We're serious. We think there's a hit out on you. Or if it isn't out, it's coming soon."

"I thought you guys weren't in the Kugelman club," I answered. "I thought that was some whole other crew."

"We're not," Jim said. "But let's say the investigations are starting to converge."

"Yeah, and with the city cops as well," Bill added.

"I haven't moved my head back and forth this much since I caught the finals at Wimbledon," I answered, looking at both of them in turn. "I wonder if you fellows could either sit closer together or just let one of you fill me in."

"If you'd stop it with the wisecracks for a couple of minutes, I could," Jim answered.

"Well, how about beginning with 'There's a hit out on you,'" I said. "Sounds like something I might be interested in."

Jim reached into his jacket and pulled out his own pack of cigarettes. He took one out and lit it. He didn't offer anything to me.

"Well, as you know," he began, "we're the political cops, not gangsters. We track the Russians, look for spies, make sure that our guys are not being tracked by theirs."

"That's what I've been wondering all along," I said. "I've never been able to figure out why you're so interested in me. I'm a glorified house detective."

"It goes back to that story about Beck and Dorfer," Jim answered.

"But that's the war," I said. "Twenty years ago. In a different country. No spies. No Russians. I don't see what that's got to do with you. Or me. Or with this hit you

are supposed to be talking about.”

“It’s not Beck or Dorfer that’s important about that story,” Jim replied. “It’s the fact it’s being talked about at all.”

I looked at him. He put his cigarette down on the edge of the ashtray.

“I mean, why are we hearing about this now? Who’s pushing the story of the executions and what do they hope to gain? Lots of shit happened in the war. Why this? Why now?”

“I thought it was the reporters who were driving it,” I answered. “Well, them and Beck’s sisters. And the West Germans. The law changed. They’re trying to get justice.”

“They’re just following the story because it exists,” Jim said. “All of them. But the question is, why does the story exist? Who told them that this happened after the war? Who decided that it was time to start talking about Beck and Dorfer? And to let Beck’s sister know? To set the reporters out after those Seabrooks out west? To get the West Germans all interested?”

“It was old news,” he continued. “It’s been buried as deep as those two heinies for twenty years and now suddenly it’s front-page news. Why?”

“I don’t know,” I answered. “Maybe because it was twenty years ago? Because it has become history? At a certain point ‘now’ becomes ‘back then’ and people start wondering what actually happened.”

“That explains why there’s a movie now called the *Battle of the Bulge*,” Jim said. “People want to relive the old glories. But it doesn’t explain why there’s suddenly front-page news about something that nobody even knew was happening at the

time.”

“Well, some people knew about it,” I said. “Fitz. Van Bergen-Aarts. Those captains out west. The POWs. The dry cleaner in Hamilton.”

“Yeah, and look what happened to them,” Jim said.

“Who?”

“Your friend Fitz and his pal the Dutch consul. The two of them.”

He paused for a second, letting the implication hang. It was news to me.

“Wait a second,” I said. “Are you saying that Fitz and Van Bergen-Aarts were killed because of the execution story? That doesn’t make any sense. Nobody knew they were even involved.”

“Until they told you,” Jim said.

“For Christ’s sake, Jim. Not this again,” I said. “You know I didn’t kill either of them.”

“Well, technically speaking, we don’t know that,” Jim said. “But I wasn’t saying you killed them. I was saying nobody knew they were involved in the story until they told you that they were involved.”

“And then they were killed,” Bill added helpfully. “Each time right after they told you.”

“Well, technically speaking,” I began, mimicking Jim, “I don’t know that they were both killed ‘right after they told me.’ I know Fitz was killed the night of a large party that I was also at, and I know that Van Bergen-Aarts was killed sometime after he spoke to me but before he caught his flight to Holland.”

“Yeah,” Jim answered. “We’re pretty sure now it was on the Friday. It’s why he

wasn't at the funeral."

"A good excuse," I said. "But also the day after I spoke to him.

"So not 'right after'," I added triumphantly, looking at Bill. It was difficult not to stick my tongue out at him.

"Okay. Then not 'right after,'" Jim answered. "But not long after either."

"What are you trying to get at?" I asked.

"You are the connection," he said. "If you didn't kill one or both of them, then somebody you know did. Somebody who knew about what you were up to or who you told."

"I didn't have time to tell anybody after Fitz's party," I answered. "I spent the time talking to Van Bergen-Aarts, Fitz, Greta, and her friend Freddie. Then I went home and he was dead early the next morning."

"Sure," Jim said. "But you didn't go home alone."

I could feel the sweat run between my shoulders as I remembered the evening. What did they know?

"I don't know what you mean," I said. "I did go home alone."

"Kugelman had his guys on you," Jim said. "You were being followed."

Ah. That.

"Okay, but that doesn't mean I told him something," I answered. I decided that the less I said about where they followed me, the better. For my self-respect, anyway.

"No. But it does put you together with McCrae and Van Bergen-Aarts. Which is why Kugelman wanted to see you the next day."

"When you told *him*," Bill added.

"What has that got to do with anything? Fitz was dead before I talked to Kugelman."

"But you confirmed what he suspected," Jim said. "That McCrae was involved and that he worked with Van Bergen-Aarts at the time."

"Again," I answered. "I don't see how the fact that Fitz and Van Bergen-Aarts were involved in some old war story would lead somebody to kill them. Especially not Kugelman, who had nothing to do with it. He wasn't even in the Army during the war. He was running some kind of black-market ring from over here."

"With your friend McCrae," Jim answered.

"He says it was with McCrae," I said. "I don't believe him."

"Well, he thinks you do," Jim said. "In fact, he thinks more than that. He thinks you were part of it. Or maybe that you're part of it now."

"I don't see how," I said. "I didn't know anything that he told me about Fitz in the war, and I was with him the whole time. He saw that I was surprised by it. And I still don't think I believe it, even now."

There was a pause. Jim took another cigarette and lit it from his last, chainsmoker-style. He leaned back and pulled hard. Looking at me.

"It's not the black-market stuff that Kugelman's concerned about, Sandy," he said. "And it's not about the executions. It's what the executions say about what happened later, after the war — when he put two and two together."

"What do you mean?"

"General Witt."

“General Witt?”

“Yeah. General Witt. The guy nobody can find who’s supposed to have ordered the executions.”

“Because he doesn’t exist,” I said. “Van Bergen-Aarts thought he was invented by the Germans to cover their tracks.”

“Van Bergen-Aarts didn’t think that,” Jim said. “That’s what he told you he thought.”

I looked at him.

“He knew exactly who General Witt was,” he continued. “Because he worked with him. At the end of the war and afterwards.”

He stopped again. I took the time to think. I still couldn’t figure out where he was going with this.

“So General Witt was real?” I asked after a moment. “But the Army said there was no such person.”

“It was like a codename,” Jim said. “For McCrae. He was General Witt.”

I stared at him slack-jawed.

“But that’d mean...”

“What?” Jim asked.

“That’d mean that Fitz arranged the executions. And saw them through.”

I stopped. Jim waited.

“That he killed them,” I added. “He killed Dorfer and Beck.”

Jim let the silence hang.

“Yeah, okay. I guess it does mean that,” Jim said after a moment. “But that’s not

really the point. Like I said, this was about afterwards.”

“Hold on,” I said. “You said that this all has to do with the fact that Kugelman was able to put two and two together. By following me around and talking to me about Van Bergen-Aarts.”

“Yeah. That’s right.”

“So how did he know that McCrae was General Witt, and why does he care what happened to Beck and Dorfer back in ’45?”

“Well, first of all, he doesn’t care what happened to Beck and Dorfer,” Jim said.

“But, secondly, he knew that McCrae was General Witt because that’s the name McCrae used when he was buying for the black market.”

“You mean...” I started.

“I mean that Kugelman didn’t need to ask you to find out that McCrae had been involved in those executions. He knew McCrae was the second he read the news reports saying this colonel had been involved in the story.”

“But if he didn’t care about the story...”

“I didn’t say he didn’t care about the story,” Jim replied. “I said he didn’t care about the executions. Beck and Dorfer meant nothing to him.”

“So what...”

“Initially, he thought there might be an angle for him to make some money,” Jim answered.

“What do you mean?”

“McCrae told us that he was approached by Kugelman about the time that article appeared in *Der Spiegel*.”

Even with all the surprise, I noticed that Jim said *Der Spiegel* with a proper pronunciation. Well-trained spy.

"We don't know how he found out about it, but he started trying to blackmail McCrae around this time."

Despite myself, I was pleased to hear that I'd got that part of the story right. Greta's "foreigners" must have been Kugelman or some of his guys.

"But you don't kill the person you're blackmailing," I said. "The whole point is to keep them alive and terrified. You maybe release the information you have on them if they stop cooperating. But even then, it makes more sense to try to get them back on the reservation without releasing it. Or all of it, anyway. Bad news is almost never as bad as your mark thinks it is and even if it is, life goes on. People get over it. Or they don't and they kill themselves. Or they kill you. But either way, once the news is out or you or your victim's dead, you aren't getting your money anymore."

"Yeah, but Kugelman didn't kill McCrae because he stopped paying blackmail about the executions," Jim said. "I said he thought he could make money from the story *at first*."

"All right," I said, not understanding. Who knew Jim had such a flair for the dramatic.

"This is where you come in, Sandy," Bill added. I'd forgotten about him.

"Kugelman killed McCrae when he realized why General Witt had wanted Beck and Dorfer dead. Well, mostly Beck," Jim said. That tennis thing again.

"Because?"

"Because Beck had seen the handover of Van der Waals."

Jim paused.

"I thought Van Bergen-Aarts explained all this to you," he said, looking at me as if I was a child.

"Wait. How do you know what Van Bergen-Aarts told me?" I asked. And then suddenly I realized. That wasn't the only thing they'd told me that they shouldn't know.

"Wait a second!" I said. "When did Fitz tell you that he'd been approached by Kugelman?"

"The day the stories first came out," Jim answered. "Back in October."

"But that can't be right," I said. "I was with him that day. The whole day. It was the season opener."

"Actually, you weren't," Jim said. "You caught up with him at the Gardens. And we picked him up after that, after the game. Right outside, on Carleton."

I remembered the taxi that had pulled up. The driver had asked for Fitz by name.

"But how did you know he wanted to talk to you?"

"He didn't. We picked him up as soon as we saw the story. Once we knew it was going to break open here, we knew we had to talk to him. The taxi thing was one of the methods we had for getting in touch with him. If a cabbie came up and called him by name, then he knew we wanted to talk with him."

"But you guys are the political cops. What do you care?" I asked. "This was about the war. Like you said, it was twenty years ago and a story nobody knew anything about until then. Except maybe in West Germany."

"Van der Waals," Jim said simply.

"What?"

"I said, we cared 'cause of Van der Waals. Fitz and Van Bergen-Aarts were running him. Against the Soviets. After the war."

He pointed back and forth between himself and Bill. "The Soviets are what we do, remember?"

"Okay. But the stories were about Beck and Dorfer, not Van der Waals."

"The whole thing was about Van der Waals," Jim said. "That's why Beck and Dorfer were killed. Because they knew about it. Well, because Beck did. He saw the handover. He knew that Van der Waals had come over to us, even while he was the most wanted man in Holland. He coulda blown McCrae's cover, so they had to deal with him. Them."

I stood up and walked around to the back of my chair. I needed to move.

"I don't..." I started, placing my hands on the back of the chair and leaning over it. "I don't understand."

"McCrae," Jim began slowly. "He was working for us. That's why we're interested in the story. Because it could have blown his cover. Let the Russians know what we were up to."

"Back then," I added.

"Whaddya mean?" Jim asked.

"I mean, it would have let the Russians know what you were up to back then. Twenty years ago. At the end of the war. Who cares?"

"Are you not following what's going on in the world, Sandy?" Jim asked. "The

Suez, Egypt and Syria, Israel and Jordan. England and the U.S. The U.S. and the Soviets. France. Gouzenko, Munsinger, Profumo, Burgess, Maclean, Philby. These are all things that 'go back to the war.' There's no 'back then' in this business. The war never stopped. It just mixed up the sides a little in '45 and kept on going."

"Sure, but twenty years ago? Even if it never stopped, twenty years is a long time."

"Twenty years just isn't that long in this business," Jim said. "I mean, look at the shit in the Middle East. They're still fighting over what happened in '49, '56, last year, whenever. It never goes away."

"And that's what's worrying you now?" I asked.

"Sort of," Jim answered.

"So what Van Bergen-Aarts told me was true?" I couldn't believe it.

"What did he tell you?" Jim asked.

"That this was all about the Israelis. Because he and McCrae and everybody were working to stop them getting guns back in '49."

"Well, more like '45, '46, '47. Van der Waals was back in Holland by '49," Jim said. "And anyway, things weren't as clear as they are now. The Russians, the Israelis, the Egyptians, the Americans, the Brits. Can't tell the players without a program.

"As long as it's about the war — the last war, I mean — then there's no problem," he continued. "Nobody cared then what happened to Beck and Dorfer. Nobody cares now. Well, maybe Beck's sisters do. But nobody else.

"A lot of bad things happened then and mostly we want to forget. All of us."

He paused.

"The problem is if it becomes about more than the war," he said. "If people start trying to figure out *why* Beck and Dorfer were killed. And especially who this 'General Witt' was and what he was doing. It stops being 'then' and starts being 'now.'"

I pushed off the chair with my hands and walked toward the door. When I reached it, I turned back and stepped to the centre of the room.

"Oh for Christ's sake, Jim, this doesn't make any sense. This is what Van Bergen-Aarts told me as well: the mob was helping the Jews buy weapons from the Soviets and we — I mean, McCrae, Van Bergen-Aarts, and I'm guessing you — were busy trying to stop them. And that Kugelman — or maybe it was Kugelman and the Israelis? I mean, who knows anymore — wanted him dead as a result."

I'd made it back to the front of the chair. I threw myself down, slumping backwards, crossing my arms, and throwing my legs out like a teenager in a huff.

"It's like a dime-store novel, Jim," I said. "Life doesn't work that way."

"I don't know about Israelis," Jim said. "But I know Kugelman did want McCrae and Van Bergen-Aarts dead. And now you."

"But why, Jim? What's in it for Kugelman? Some kind of comic book revenge? That's not how mobsters work. Kugelman doesn't care what the Israelis think of you guys. He's interested in money. You say he thought he could make some off of Fitz when the story first broke, and that means he had reason *not* to kill him. Like I said, blackmailers don't kill their marks. They might get killed by them. But there's no reason for them to bump off the guy they are hoping to make money off."

"I think you're missing the point, Sandy," Jim said. "You're right. Blackmailers don't kill their victims."

"But like you said, victims do sometimes kill their blackmailers." It was Bill again.

"McCrae and Van Bergen-Aarts were killed because Kugelman suddenly realized that *he* was the one who had something to fear if the news got out," Jim added.

"You mean Fitz was blackmailing Kugelman?" I asked. My head was starting to hurt. "I don't believe you. Greta said Fitz was worried about the guys who were calling him."

"It's not that Kugelman was being blackmailed," Jim answered. "It was that he realized there was something in the story that could hurt him."

"He's a mobster, Sandy," Bill said. I turned toward him. "As long as he keeps things within reason, he's got nothing to worry about. Chewing the fat with Moe and Bondi in the Bagel. Maybe busting some other mobster's chops. A hit or two on some guy that was up to no good anyway and nobody misses but his mama. Until a couple of years ago nobody on either side of the border really cared. We were way too busy with the Russians.

"The past couple of years, though, things have got a lot worse: the FBI started pushing them around down south the past five years, and in the past year or so we've started to get involved as well. We got a joint operation going with them right now 'cause of Expo and the whole Joey Bananas thing."

Joe "Bananas" Bonanno was a mobster from the States who'd fled to Montreal after it was discovered he was planning a hit against the leaders of the New York

mob. He reappeared for a gunfight a year or two ago and then vanished again. A couple of weeks ago, there'd been an article in the *Globe* that the cops were going to move on him on both sides of the border.

"The last thing Kugelman needs is for something that ties him to the Russians," Jim added. "The mob worked hard in the war to establish they were on our side. And then in the 1950s they worked with us and the FBI to keep the communists out. If it turns out now that Kugelman had actually been working with the Soviets, then all of a sudden the mob becomes a security risk. And that means we become interested in him. Parliamentary inquiries. Investigations. No more quiet little crap games or whores. Or even heroin. Now he's got some serious enemies."

"And so he kills Fitz?" I asked. "How come?"

"He kills McCrae and he kills Van Bergen-Aarts because they were running Van der Waals against him," Jim said. "And now that people are looking at what happened to Beck, he doesn't want the whole story coming out. 'Cause he was working with the Soviets after the war and the last thing anybody on his side needs is a story in the *New York Times* — or even the *Globe and Mail* — saying that the mob has communist connections. Hoover'd be over that like the clap. And the American mob would eat him up like a grizzly bear at a salmon run."

Nice homey metaphor, I thought. I'd forgotten Jim came from out west.

"Remember, Sandy," Bill started up, chasing the thought from my head. "The mob did everything it could to stay onside with the Allies during the war — cleared the ports, made sure the trains ran, stitched up the unions. And then in the 1950s they went all out on anti-communism.

"So the last thing they need anybody to hear now is that they were also working with the Soviets. We've just had Philby, Maclean, Gouzenko. The whole thing. The Cambridge Four was enough. The mob doesn't want us talking about the Calabria Four as well."

"And it's for this that Kugelman wants me dead?" I asked.

"Yeah," Bill answered. "Because McCrae and the Dutch guy told you about Van der Waals and why they killed Beck and Dorfer."

"Well, actually, they didn't," I said. "Or at least not the whole thing."

"No, you're right. I guess that was us who told you," Jim said.

"Yeah," I said. "Thanks."

"Oh, he was going to kill you anyway," Bill said. "No matter how you found it out."

Chapter 60

Jim and Bill drove me back to the Temple Building late in the afternoon. I hurried up to my office to catch Nymphaea before she left.

“Ah,” she said when I opened the door. “You’re all right then.” She was a lot less worried than the last time McFadden and Co. had kidnapped me off the street.

“Yeah,” I said, a little disappointed. “They mostly wanted to give me a talking-to. They had some ideas they wanted to run past me on what happened to Mr. McCrae and Van Bergen-Aarts.”

“Those poor men,” Nymphaea said. “Do they know who did it?”

“They’ve got some ideas,” I said. “Nothing concrete, I don’t think.”

I decided not to tell her the whole story. No point getting her more worried about me than usual.

“Well, there’s nothing more for you here today,” she said to me, when I finished, sorting the papers on her desk in preparation for going home. “Why don’t you head home and let me pack up?”

I opened the door to my office and took a quick look inside. Nothing on the desk. I could go home.

“Sure,” I said, closing the door and putting my hat back on. “Thanks.”

I took the elevator down to the lobby and headed over to the Bay Street doors. It was a couple of minutes after five, and the building was already empty. Marge was turning the sign on the door to Flytes to “Closed.” I caught her eye and she blew

me a kiss.

I took the Bay Street stairs two at a time. It was still about fifty outside and clear. I'd promised Edie and Mabel that we could watch the game together tomorrow, so I wanted to get home on time to clean up and make sure I had everything. I pushed open the street doors.

"Mr. Sanderson!" a voice called out as I went through the door. A man's voice. I knew it but couldn't quite place it. I looked around to see where it was coming from.

"Mr. Sanderson," he said again. And as he did, I both placed the voice and found the man. It was Joey Benvenuti, Kugelman's polite young thug. He was leaning against the wall of the building, a little to the south of the entrance. He had a matchstick in his mouth and he was slumped down, hat pushed forward over his eyes. Like a movie-style hitman.

I turned toward him, surprised to see him down here all alone. Without Bondi.

And then I realized. Down here. Kugelman's thug. Waiting for me. Like a movie-style hitman.

Without Bondi.

His partner.

One of the things you quickly learn in a war is that you have to be aware of what's around you. At all times. With every step. You never know where the shot's going to come from or what might fall out of the sky or where the mines are. So you look around. The whole time. Left. Right. Up. Down. Over your shoulder. Then the other one. Up again. And so on. Is that a tripwire? Is that tree wide enough to take cover behind? Who's that up the road? Is there movement there in the grass?

Could I roll into that ditch? You're on sharp the whole time. And you never lose it. I hear it all the time from guys from the war. How they are still always looking for cover as they walk down the street, or head out to their car, or go into a restaurant. Twenty years later. In Toronto. Every hour of every day.

I'm no different. It may have taken me half a second to realize what Joey standing there by himself meant. But it took much less than half a second for me to react. I'd already scoped the scene without thinking about it. The lights had turned green at Bay and Queen just as I came out the door and the northbound cars on the far side of Bay were starting to move north. The southbound lanes, closest to me, were empty, but the cars at Queen had started moving toward us and it would be only a second or two before the first passed in front of me.

So I should get out in the street.

I took off with a jump, diving, weaving, and running, like they taught us in the war. There was a loud echoing clap — like a two-by-four slapping on cement, except much louder — and a chunk of sidewalk flew up under me as I jumped up and stretched out toward the street, preparing to drop and roll again. Half a second earlier and it wouldn't have been cement flying up.

The idea was to get out onto Bay, among the cars coming down toward me. If I could get far enough out, I figured, the cars'd probably split around me, braking on both sides and maybe bumping into each other a little, leaving a wall of steel between me and what I figured must be Bondi, taking the shots. Dangerous for the people in the cars, I can see now, using them as a shield like that. But I wasn't thinking of the people in the cars. When you're getting shot at, all you worry about

is getting something between you and the gun. If there's somebody in that something? Well, that's their problem, I guess.

I made it to the centre of the southbound lanes, just as I'd hoped, before the cars arrived. There was a screeching of brakes and a honking of horns and the cars went left and right. But not before Bondi had some luck too. His second shot nicked my right calf and then, almost right away, I felt a hard smack in my back, a little to the right and below my shoulder blade. It was like I'd been hit by a bat, except there was no pain. Not even a numbness.

The bullet turned me around and a third round hit me high on the left shoulder, throwing me hard against a car that had stopped behind me. I banged my head off the rear door and slid down the panel. There was a crashing noise and a screech in front of me as a car in the lane closest to the sidewalk stopped and was bumped by the one behind it. My wall.

I slumped farther and then the driver of the car behind me hit the gas, squealing out into the northbound lanes, getting out of the way. The movement pitched me forward and to the side. The last thing I remember was the smell of rubber and tire smoke. And then I was out.

Chapter 61

Jumping into traffic like that saved my life. When Bondi and Joey saw the cars piling up in front of me, they realized they weren't going to get in a fifth shot and so they took off. Although I hadn't been thinking about it, nobody on the street was injured either. Except me. Two through-and-throughs, in my calf and left shoulder, and a bullet lodged against my ribs in my upper-right back in and under my shoulder blade. I was lucky, sort of: shot but not killed, and only the two shoulder injuries were that serious.

I don't have a lot of memory of the next couple of days. I'm told that I was conscious when the ambulance arrived and for most of the way to the hospital. But I don't remember any of it. Nymphaea says she and Marge came to see me that evening, but I was in surgery until well after visiting hours. She came back the next day, bringing Edie and Mabel. Marty came and left some books. Ida came with Greta and Tini and left flowers and magazines when they were told I couldn't see anybody.

I start remembering things from Saturday, April 22. I'd been shot on the afternoon of the nineteenth, the day before the first game of the finals, and so I didn't know much about it, at first, except that the Leafs lost. Then I lost a day to recovery. So when I came out of my daze, on the Saturday, I was hungry for news. The nurses were going to get a TV from somewhere for the game that night, though I wouldn't be able to see it — I was still too sick. But they told me they'd get

me a radio or turn the TV up so I could hear.

Meanwhile, I caught up on what I missed. Edie and Mable had come on Friday with a copy of the *Globe*. They'd left it behind so I could read up on the game.

A disaster.

In theory, the Leafs who were playing in Montreal were the same team who had faced down Chicago, the best team in the league, only two days earlier. But that's not what the papers said. The Leafs who showed up in the Forum were the ones who'd lost all those games in January and February, back when they couldn't buy a goal. The same ones who then threw the first game against Chicago. Slow and tired-looking. Making mistakes all over the place.

Montreal, on the other hand, who'd taken New York in four straight and hadn't lost in fifteen games, were rested and ready.

Sawchuk in particular seems to have had a bad night of it. He'd go one way, and the puck would go the other. He'd catch it and then drop it behind him. Fall down to block, but let it under him anyway. But then that's Sawchuk all over. When he has his bad days, they are really bad.

At the other end of the rink, Rogie Vachon played the way Sawchuk had against Chicago: he sprawled this way and that, keeping the shots out: off his glove, off his shoulder, kicked out with a toe. The Leafs couldn't get a thing past him no matter how hard they tried.

6-2 for Montreal.

Chapter 62

I heard Game Two from the TV out in the hallway, though I was still pretty groggy.

This one seemed to go a lot better. Just like against Chicago, the Leafs came back with a new goalie and a new attitude. Bower started this time and he played the way Sawchuk had when they started winning against the Hawks. Thirty-one saves for the shutout, including a couple of good power-play chances from Cournoyer.

But if Bower kept the Leafs in the game, it was the defence who won it for them. Horton, Stanley, Hillman, Pronovost — those same tough, close-checking guys who kept Chicago under control and now worked their magic against Montreal. Even Richard couldn't break free. Rousseau, Beliveau, or Ferguson? Nothing. Cournoyer, who sounded like he played the best of everybody on the Habs side, couldn't do much against the wall of blue. And the few times he did get round it, you had Bower. The wall behind the wall. He stopped everything thrown at him, including a couple of sticks. He finished the game with a huge bloody nose.

But it was 3-0 Toronto. In the Forum. Game Two.

Chapter 63

I was starting to feel a lot better by Game Three. I still couldn't move around so much, and so Susan, my afternoon nurse, went and found me a TV of my own for the evening. It was black and white and pretty small, so not what I was used to anymore. But it did the job.

As did the Leafs.

The game started out all right, with the boys in blue and the boys in red trading goals and penalties throughout the first and second periods. Beliveau got the first for Montreal. Then Stemkowski for Toronto. Horton, Ferguson, Bower, Larose, and Mahovlich in the box, one after the other.

In the second, they reversed the order: Pappin from Horton and Pulford for Toronto, and Ferguson from Beliveau for Montreal. There was a punchup about a third of the way through that put Conacher, Shack, and Cornoyer away for a while. And later the Big M and Gentleman Jean did some stick swinging and so got the box together.

The third period was magnificent, even if nobody scored and only Ferguson got a penalty. Montreal threw themselves at the Toronto net, hammering away at Bower, who stopped everything. Slapshots. Poke shots. Dekes. Wristers from far out and close in. Backhands. Montreal couldn't do anything to shake him. They cut across the crease. They ran him when he grabbed the puck. They hit him with their sticks. But nothing got by.

They were 2-2 at the end of the third, so we were going to overtime. I couldn't keep my head up by this point and fell asleep. But the nurses told me they went on for two periods: Montreal all over Toronto in the first overtime but not able to get anything past the man I think I'm going to call Brickwall Bower. And then Toronto all over Montreal in the second overtime before Pulford, from the great Stemkowski, the guy who turned it all around for us back in February, managed to put one in for the good guys about halfway through.

3-2 Leafs.

And a 2-1 lead in the series.

Jesus, I was thinking. We might take it.

Chapter 64

The next game was on Thursday, April 27. I'd been in the hospital for a week by this point and was starting to move around. Edie and Mabel came by in the morning. They said to check up on me, but I think they also wanted to know when I'd be home so they could start watching the games in colour again. I told them they could use my place while I was in the hospital and gave them my apartment keys. Mabel thanked me. The girl's turning into a real chatterbox.

In the early afternoon, I had a visit from Wally. He knocked on the door frame about two.

"How're ye doing, Sandy?" he said with what I like to think was a hint of concern. "Four years the Bosche tried to do ye in, and now it's a couple of wee jigaboos that nearly do the deed."

"Glad to see you too, Wally," I said. "And grateful for the visit."

"Aye, well. It's official business."

"Official business?" I asked. "What can you want from me? I told you already that it must have been Kugelman's men, though I only saw the polite one. Joey. Bondi musta been the gunman, though I never saw him."

"Aye," Wally answered. "It was Kugelman's men, sure enough. But I'm no here for the identification. We're well beyond that."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, we decided to move on Kugelman after the hit. We canna have his thugs

shooting up the streets of our fair city, and the mayor and council were in a right state about it.”

I looked at him.

“We went in with the Mounties,” he continued. “This morn, in fact, to take him down.”

“Who?” I asked. “Bondi? Joey?”

“The whole kit-and-kaboodle. Starting with Kugelman himself.”

“The whole mob,” I said. “Jeez. What does Kugelman have to say about it?”

“Nothing,” Wally said. “We never got t’ask him.”

“You mean he got away?” I asked. I felt a stitch pull in my back. “You mean he’s still out there? Jesus, Wally, he’ll be trying twice as hard to get me now.”

“Nae fear, Sandy,” Wally answered. “Nae fear. He’ll no be coming fer the likes o’ you. At least no in this life.”

I thought I understood.

“You mean he’s dead?”

“Aye. And Bondi, and the wee thug Joey, and a couple o’ the others.”

He paused. I tried to remember if Van Bergen-Aarts thought Joey was more of a thug or a hoodlum. But I didn’t say anything.

“All o’ them, really,” he added. “Only the money man, Moe, came quietly.”

“Sounds like a bloodbath,” I said. “Where’d it go down? Are you all okay? Anybody hurt on our side?”

“A bloodbath it was, right enough,” he said. “For them. We’d cornered Kugelman and his men in his office at Spadina there, but they came out guns a-blazing.”

"Anybody hurt?" I asked again.

"Well, a whole heap o' villains," he said. "If ye call being dead 'hurt.' But naebody really on the side o' law an' order. One of the constables got summat in his hand and there was a lot o' fright among the wains. But a lot of noise more than any good shooting. At the bad guys' end o' things, at any rate."

"So where does that leave us?"

"Well, I think that closes the matter," Wally said. "Unless there's summat you'd like to confess. Kugelman was the baddy, we think. He killed Mr. McCrae and that Dutch fellow. And tried to kill you, though I dinna hold that quite so much agin'im."

"And now he's dead," I added, ignoring the jibe.

"He is," Wally agreed. "And all his works."

"Well, thank you, Wally," I said. "Thank you and thanks to all your men."

"Aye. Serve and protect. It's what we do."

"Thanks."

"Not at all," he answered, backing away again. He paused, twisting his hat in his hand.

"Right, I'll get out from under ye," he said. "Ye'll need yer beauty rest after the excitement o' the week."

He reached the door, turned, and strode away down the hallway.

Chapter 65

Nurse Susan did her magic for me once again that evening, bringing me a TV on some kind of rolling stand. A bigger one this time, but still black and white. So I got to watch Game Four as well. With three bullet holes in me and two arms in slings. But I was grateful it wasn't worse.

I was pretty sure the Leafs were going to win this one too: at home, after two solid wins in a row, and knowing that they could do to Montreal what they'd already done in Chicago.

And I know it's stupid, but I also thought they'd win because Kugelman was dead. I'm not a superstitious man, but I couldn't help noticing over the past winter that the Leafs and what I guess I should now call the Kugelman case ran in parallel. When things went well in my investigations, the Leafs also did well. When they didn't go well with me and Kugelman, they didn't go well with the Leafs. McCrae dies and the Leafs start a ten game losing streak. I finally get some answers after Van Bergen-Aarts is killed and the Leafs start to win again. Maybe it's the morphine, but you gotta admit there's a pattern in there somewheres, right?

Except they lost this evening. Kugelman was dead. I was alive. The case was solved. And the Leafs lost anyway.

So then I began to think that maybe the scientific explanation was that it was Thursday. Every time the Leafs lost in these playoffs, it's been on a Thursday. Games One and Four against Chicago? Thursdays. Game One against Montreal?

Thursday. This evening? Thursday.

So maybe they'll win the Cup after all. The series is tied 2-2 and there's a Saturday and a Tuesday game to go before they gotta play again on a Thursday. Maybe they won't need it and maybe they sweep the next two. Hogtown wins the Cup.

But then I thought, maybe the problem's just Sawchuk. Put him in net and they lose. Leave him out and they win.

'Course in Chicago, it was Sawchuk who was hot and Bower who was the sieve, so maybe we're not talking about a law of nature. But against Montreal it might be, right? Sawchuk was in when they lost against Montreal in Game One, and then Bower did handstands to get them through to today. Except he's an old man and old men who do handstands are going to pull some muscles. Which Bower did. In the warmup.

Leaving us with Sawchuk. On a Thursday.

The result was a 6-2 sweep. These were the Habs who everybody in blue and those who love them were afraid might show up one day. Gentleman Jean, the Pocket Rocket, Backstrom, Roberts — they were all on their game for Montreal, which is more than you can say for the Leafs. Only Walton and Horton were able to get past Vachon at the other end, and neither goal seemed to do anything to shake Montreal's confidence.

The first period was all right for the Leafs, with only two goals going against, both in the back half. Backstrom got a turnover behind Horton and Stanley, throwing the puck without even looking into an open corner behind Sawchuk. Ugly

but it still counts. Beliveau got the second less than a minute later, when he somehow bounced the puck off the Leafs' goalie in a scrum at the goal line. Ugly again, from a man who normally scores the pretty ones. But it also counted.

It was the second period when things got really bad. The Leafs got one back at the very beginning, when Walton put one through from the point. Not bad, actually. But Richard came back quickly for the Habs, skating around Horton and putting in a backhand that seemed to go through Sawchuk's glove. It was ten minutes before the red light went on again for Toronto, Horton against Vachon.

But that was really the end of it. From then on it was all Montreal for the rest of the game. Beliveau and Backstrom got their seconds, a couple of minutes apart, and then Roberts in the third.

The only excitement left on the Toronto side came when Imlach finally put Shack out on the ice. He did what he was supposed to do, bashing people left and right and ending up in a major brawl with Harris and Ferguson after Roberts's goal.

Clear the track.

Let's hope it's Thursdays that cause this. And that Bower's better by Saturday.

Because I don't have any more cases to solve.

Chapter 66

They pushed me out on Friday afternoon. I was still pretty stiff, my left arm was in a sling, and I had a tearing feeling on the stitches in my back every time I moved. But you know how hospitals are — always trying to move you on. And there was also nothing more they could do for me, I guess. Let time do her work.

The Kerr sisters were waiting when I got home. They used my keys to unlock the door and let me in. There was a gigantic bouquet of flowers on the table, in front of the TV.

“We thought we should welcome you home in style,” Edie said when I opened the door. “There’s nothing like flowers when you come home from the hospital.”

I invited them in for some tea, but Edie declined.

“You need your rest,” she said. “Mabs and I will put on some coffee while you get yourself settled. But then we’ll head home. You need your beauty rest.”

“That’s the same thing Wally said to me,” I said. They looked at me blankly. “The Scottish detective?” I added, deciding that it would be too hard to explain any other way.

“Oh yes,” Edie said. “He was here early in the week. Asked if you were home. As if he didn’t know better,” she added conspiratorially.

“I think he was planning to ‘snoop around,’” Mabel said, with a strange emphasis on *snoop*.

“But we stopped him!”

"Yes, we sent him on his way," Edie agreed. "We said, 'We'll be happy to let him know you called'."

And that showed him, apparently.

Edie and Mabel fussed around a little longer before going back across the hallway to their own apartment. I made sure to invite them for the game the following evening.

Then Marty called in the early evening to check on how I was doing.

"You were out of it when I came by last Friday," she said. "I wasn't sure you were going to make it."

"Thanks for the books," I said. "I've never had a chance to read *The Feminine Mystique*."

"And what do you think?"

"Well, like I said, I've never had a chance to read *The Feminine Mystique*."

"And?"

"Turns out this wasn't it either."

"You cunt!" she said. "Did you do anything except oogle the nurses?"

"Well, I started on *Tropic of Cancer*," I said. "So there is that."

"And?"

"Well, he uses the word *fuck* a lot," I said. "I'm sure it's very artistic."

I paused. She waited.

"To be honest," I said. "When you've been shot up, it turns out, a good magazine is better than stories of Parisian whores."

"You're such a bougie fuck, Sandy," Marty said.

"Yeah, well, I've seen the real thing."

"What?"

"Parisian whores."

There was a pause again.

"Whatever," she said, finally giving up on me. "You can bring a horse to the well..."

We paused again.

"Did you read about the massacre?" she asked suddenly, changing the subject.

"With Kugelman?" she added when I didn't reply.

"Wally came and told me about it," I said. "Sounds like it was a bloodbath."

"The City of Toronto hasn't seen a shootout like this since Prohibition," she said in a deep, "newsreel"-type voice. "Yeah, it sounds like it was something."

"Did you cover it?"

"Rewrite," she said. "They don't let girls go to shootouts. The boys went and looked at the bodies and the blood and I turned their grunts into something humans could understand."

"Sorry."

"My life's work," she said with an ironic brightness. "Behind every successful man, and all that."

"Sounds like that's it then," I said. "Murders solved, case closed. Kugelman killed Fitz and Van Bergen-Aarts, and tried to kill me. And he did it all because he was afraid the news would come out that he'd been working with the Reds."

"I guess," she said. "Certainly what the pigs are saying."

Another pause.

"I feel bad about Tini in all this," I said. "Fitz's daughter. Losing her dad like that."

"Stepdad, though, right?" Marty said. "Not that it matters, of course," she added quickly, self-consciously. "Still a loss."

"You're the second person to say that, Marty," I said. "I don't understand."

"What you told me, back in the day," she said. "About your time in Amsterdam. Fitz and his wife and the baby."

"Yeah?" I answered, still not understanding.

"Jesus, Sandy," Marty said, exasperated. "Did they not teach you about biology back in the nineteenth century? How babies are made?"

"Yeah, of course I know that."

"All right" she said, speaking slowly, bringing me along. "When was Tini born?"

"45. Right after the war."

"No shit," she said. "I meant what month."

"December. Just before Christmas."

"Beginning or end?"

"What do you mean?"

"The beginning or end of December?" she asked. "When she was born?"

"Beginning," I said. "The fifth. *Sinterklaas*. Dutch Christmas."

"Okay," she replied. "And when was it that the war ended again?"

"May

"What day?"

"Well, that depends, a little," I began professorially before Marty cut me off.

"Oh for fuck's sake, Sandy," she said. "V-E Day's good enough."

"The eighth, then."

"Okay," she said, still leading me along. "And how many months are there between the eighth of May and the fifth of December?"

I counted out on my fingers.

"Eight," I said. "Almost."

"So?" she asked suggestively.

"So what?"

"How long does it take to make a baby?"

"Well, a couple of minutes. A bit more if you're lucky," I answered, pleased with myself.

"Yeah, if *you're* lucky, you mean," she replied. Ouch.

"I meant after that. The woman's work."

"Okay," I answered, getting the point. "But lots of babies are born early."

"Not at seven, barely eight months, they're not," she said. "Not at the end of the war. Not in Holland. Not the ones who survive."

She paused. I was silent.

"Sandy," she began, spelling it out. "Either Greta and McCrae started fucking a month or so before V-E Day or your gal-pal was knocked up before you and Fitz met her. I mean, she wouldn't have known she was pregnant until June or July if she caught it from you or your friend."

She stopped. Letting it sink in.

"It's just fucking biology."

It took me a minute or two before I realized she was right. Fitz hadn't got Greta pregnant. He had found out she was pregnant and helped her cover it up. My heart swelled.

"Jesus," I said. "I'd never thought of that before."

"Men," Marty said. "You kill each other all the time, but you know fuck-all about where the replacements come from."

"But that says a lot about Fitz then, Marty," I said. "I mean, that was a stand-up thing to do for a girl. Especially back in those days. The Dutch were shaving the heads of the *moffenhoeren* — all the girls they thought who'd slept with the Germans — right out in the street. It might have been dangerous for her if there wasn't a father."

"Yeah, all right," Marty said begrudgingly. "Maybe he wasn't being a cunt."

"Still a fucking man, though."

Chapter 67

Bower wasn't better by Saturday. His injury from the warmup in the last game was a pulled groin and Rex MacLeod had a piece in the *Globe* about how it might mean the season for him. And at forty-two, I'm guessing, his career. At a certain point you realize you're not young anymore, and it's the new kids' time.

Edie and Mabel came over at six. They'd brought 7-Up for Mabel's shandies, and they were with a tall, clean-cut young man in chinos and a polo shirt. He was holding a case of Old Vienna.

"This is my grandson Thijs," Edie said as she walked through the door. "My daughter Kathleen's son.

"We thought you might not be in any shape to get the beer yourself," she added, looking at my arm.

Thijs brought the case of beer into the kitchen, and I supervised as he put a few bottles in the fridge. He went out into the living room and came back with Mabel's 7 Up.

"Let me make up the drinks," he said to me with a smile. "Nana and Auntie Mabel are waiting for you in the living room."

I headed back out to the living room to find Edie and Mabel already in place on the couch. I went over to the armchair.

"Have you read the news, Mr. Sanderson?" Edie asked before I sat down. "Bower's out."

"For the *season*," Mabel added.

Thijs came in with two beers and a shandy on a tray, interrupting us.

"Nana. Auntie. Mr. Sanderson," he said as he put them down.

"Aren't you going to get something for yourself?" I asked. "I don't think we're going to get through all twenty-four tonight, on our own."

"That's for tonight *and* Tuesday," Edie said, jumping in. "Thijs is going to catch up with some friends in a tavern and leave us older ones alone."

"I've left the opener on the counter, Mr. Sanderson," he said, looking at my arm. "Are you going to be okay?"

"They'd need to do much worse before I can't open a beer, son," I said, feeling the pinch of Edie's *older ones*. "I think we'll manage."

Thijs headed out and Edie, Mabel, and I discussed the upcoming game. They'd read all the opinion pieces in the paper and were quite sure that we were going to do alright tonight.

"'Terry's a quiet, humble man'," Edie said, quoting one of the sport's writers, and bringing the focus back to the game. "'He knows you gotta let the ones behind you stay behind. You can only stop the next shot, not the last one'."

Mabel nodded her agreement with Edie's wisdom, as her older sister went through the rest of the lineup. In the *Telegram*, she'd been reading about the expansion draft and who might or might not be with the team next year. She seemed particularly concerned about the fate of Kelly, who the bookies had coaching L.A. next year.

"I wonder if we should be counting our Coach Kellys before they've hatched,

Mrs. McNeill,” I said after a long discussion. “He’s not done much for us this season, and we still don’t know how we’re going to do this year.”

“We’re going to win it all, young man,” Edie answered, looking at me severely. “I’ve told you this before. Tuesday night. The Cup is ours Tuesday night.”

Montreal came out of the gate the way they’d played on Thursday: hammering at the Toronto defence and making Sawchuk work for every save.

The first chance came almost immediately. Backstrom got the puck for Montreal and came flying down the left wing. He got around Pappin and went left and then right around Hillman, who ended up facing the wrong way, while Backstrom made a quick cut across the crease. He’d scored two from here last game and you could tell he thought he had this one as well. He faked a forehand, pulled it to the back, and then tried to put it over Sawchuk’s left shoulder, just like in Game Four.

This time, though, Sawchuk stayed with him, not buying the feint. He stayed standing up and the puck hit him right at the top of the chest pad, just below his neck. He fell, bringing the puck down with him, and getting the whistle.

The save was more important for Toronto than it was for Montreal, I think, though I read on Monday that the Canadiens thought it was the most important play of the game. The reason you need good goaltending in the playoffs is that it gives the players in front confidence to take chances. If they know the goalie can stop the puck, then they can try to score at the other end. It’s when they don’t trust that their own net is covered that they start huddling back, bunching up behind their own blue line and making only desperate stabs every so often at the other end. But you never win on individual effort. You gotta move the puck and keep it down at the

other end of the ice. It's not the breakaways that win hockey games, it's bashing away in the other side's crease. Most goals are ugly. Especially in the playoffs.

The Habs kept it up and Sawchuk kept them out until Rochefort got a flukey one after about six minutes. But by this point the Leafs knew they could rely on their netman, while the Canadiens were starting to worry they couldn't pull it off. The charge began to slacken and the play started going the other way. About five minutes left in the period, Pappin put one in for the boys in blue. 1-1.

After that, the Habs collapsed. Vachon, who'd been so strong in the first and fourth games, struggled for the entire second period, letting in a second shot from about forty feet out and another two from careless rebounds in front of the net.

"It's as I said, Mr. Sanderson," Edie said after Keon got the fourth goal for Toronto — a hardscrabble one where he chased Trembley all the way back to centre ice, got the puck off him with the backcheck, and then came back into the Montreal end doing a one-two with Horton. "Montreal's had it. There will be no Game Seven. The Cup is ours."

Blake pulled Vachon for Worsley at the beginning of the third period. The Gump didn't let anything in, but the game was done. By the end of the third, it looked like Imlach was toying with them. He put Shack out again, this time with Walton and Marcetta, and even the reserves almost put one in. When the final countdown came, I think the Habs were calling out the seconds louder than the fans. If they'd had a white flag, they'd be waving it. They wanted to get home and regroup.

Edie and Mabel had had a couple of drinks through the game, and so were a little tighter than I'm used to seeing them. I helped them up with my least bad arm

and walked them across the hall to their apartment. Edie had a little trouble with her keys, so I was able to return the favour she'd done for me when I got back from the hospital.

"No flowers to welcome you, I'm afraid, Mrs. McNeill, Miss Kerr. But at least you're safely home."

"Tuesday night, boyo!" Mabel yelled. And then addressing the Montreal Canadiens: "One more game and it's pea soup time for you, mes amis!"

It seemed to me that this might be a good time to say good night and close the door.

Chapter 68

I spent Sunday at home, recovering, reading the papers that had piled up while I was in the hospital.

On Monday, I was starting to go a little stir-crazy, so I headed down to the corner to see if they still had my copies of *Hush*.

Louie was behind the counter. He came here from Lebanon in the 1950s and is always well groomed: jet-black moustache and thick dark hair that he wears oiled. Expensive suits with a nice shirt and tie. Much nicer than you expect to see in a smoke shop.

Today he was wearing a light-purple shirt under a light-grey suit jacket, with a dark, moss-green tie. He looked like a band leader getting ready to go on stage at the Flamingo Club.

“Mr. Sanderson,” he greeted me as I opened the door. The bell tingled.

“I heard that you were hurt,” he continued. “But I didn’t see nothing about it in the papers.”

I told him the story. He recognized it, of course, once he learned of the details. The shooting had been front-page news in all the papers, but somehow they’d kept my name out of it. “A Toronto private investigator” was all they’d said at the time, and it seems that Louie doesn’t know enough about me to put two and two together.

I’m guessing I have Marty to thank at the *Telegram*. Not sure what happened at

the *Globe* or the *Star*. But it's probably a good thing. My clients aren't the kind who think having their investigators shot up is a sign they're working hard. Blood's too hard to get out of the boardroom carpet.

Louie and I chatted a bit more about my injuries, the neighbourhood, the cigarette-store business, and Dave, his partner. Finally, he reached under the counter and brought out a small stack of newspaper.

"You didn't come in last week," he said. "So I keep your *Hush* here for you in case you want it still. Plus this week."

I reached into my jacket to get my wallet, wincing a little as I did: the stitches were still tight on my right shoulder.

Louie pushed the copies toward me across the counter.

"No charge," he said. "I'm just glad to see you're okay."

Chapter 69

Hush this week was snarkier and meaner than usual. The “Breeze Around” hated the hockey coverage and was much more open than usual in calling out the homos and hookers. It had rumours about which Leafs were going to be taken in the expansion draft — including maybe Mahovlich. And there was a long article about a poor man who’d been caught up in some kind of sting for buggery at the public toilets. He got seven years, which seemed a little harsh. You’d do less time for manslaughter.

Nasty, really, today, rather than fun. Depressing, in fact.

By about noon I’d been through the *Globe* and *Hush*, and I was wondering what to do with myself until the *Star* and *Tely* came out when the buzzer rang for the front door. I hit the intercom.

“Sendie,” a woman’s voice said. It was Greta. I buzzed her in.

She came up the stairs and turned immediately toward me. It was warm, in the mid-seventies, but had just started raining. Greta was a bit overdressed for the weather in a woollen green-, orange-, and white-striped dress, with red-and-white rubber ankle boots. She had a large transparent umbrella with her, rolled up. It was still wet.

She’d brought flowers with her. A large bouquet of daisies, peonies, hydrangeas, and pansies wrapped in paper. She was holding them upside down.

I leaned forward for the greeting kiss.

"It's so good to see you up, Sendie," Greta said as she brushed past me in the doorway after our greeting. "I was very worried for you."

She went into the kitchen to find a vase, telling me to sit down while she put the flowers away. I sat in the armchair I used when Edie and Mabel were over.

"This looks nice," she said as she came back into the room. Edie and Mabel's flowers were starting to wilt, and Greta moved them to my dining-room table, putting hers in their place on the coffee table.

"It's so hard to get good flowers here," she said, fussing over the vase. "They are mostly half dead and you have to pick through them very carefully to get the ones that are still closed."

I looked at the bouquet she'd put on the table. About half the buds were closed, and the rest only half open.

"I think that this one should last a couple of days, at least. If you take care of it."

She fussed around a little more before sitting down. Did I want tea? She wouldn't mind herself. I was coffee, right? Back into the kitchen to put on the kettle. Did I take milk? No, that's right, I didn't. And no sugar either. Finally she came back, gave me a cup of coffee, and put the kettle on the table. She sat down.

"Well, Sendie," she began again. "As I have said. I was very worried for you. They said in the first days that you were heavily wounded."

"More than a nick," I agreed. "Though I don't remember much myself."

We chatted about what happened and where I was shot. I moved around to show her where the pain points were. I could move my left arm, in the sling, backward and forward and from left to right but still couldn't carry much of anything

with it. I was a little better on the right-hand side but couldn't do much without feeling like I was tearing my stitches.

I did a bit more invalid gymnastics before Greta agreed that as bad as things looked, they could have been much worse, and at least I was on the mend. No organs damaged. Just some torn muscles and broken bones.

We fell silent.

"Why did they do this to you?" Greta asked after a moment. "Inspector McDumont came along to my house and told me that this Mr. Kugelman is now dead and that he was the person who had tried to kill you. But he never told me why. Why were they trying to kill you? I thought this Kugelman business was about the war. About Fitz and Dirk, and about the terrible things they had done then. Why were they trying to kill you now?"

I wasn't sure what to say. By this time, I'd come to believe Jim and Bill from the Mounties that it was all about Kugelman and his worry that news about his work after the war would bring unwelcome attention to his business from the government and, as a result, his "associates" in the Italian mob. And that he or his men had garrotted Fitz and shot Van Bergen-Aarts and tried to have me killed in the street in an attempt to stop the story of this "General Witt" getting out. Might seem a bit extreme as a solution, I admit. But then mobsters aren't known for their love of nuance.

But it was also a complicated bloody story and I wasn't sure it reflected that well on Fitz. It confirmed, I think, that he was active in the black market during the war. And, if he was General Witt, then it meant that he hadn't just known about the

death of Freddie's brother, he'd actually made sure it happened: handed Beck and Dorfer over to the Germans, making sure that the execution was carried out after the verdicts. I remembered how disappointed Greta had been in him when she found out that he knew about the deaths. What would she think now if she knew that he had actually arranged the killing?

"It seems that Kugelman thought that I'd been involved in all that business after the war as well, Greta," I said after a pause. "When he decided to start cleaning things up, he figured that he needed to get rid of me too."

"And were you?" Greta asked right away, with an intensity in her voice. "Did you know about Rainer and this Dorfer boy after the war?"

"I did not," I answered truthfully. "The first I heard about this was when it came out in the papers last fall. The tragedy of it all is that it didn't come to us. That the Seabrooks didn't realize that Beck and Dorfer were telling the truth and that they should never have been put in the wrong camp."

I paused. Greta looked at me, appraising.

"Or tried and shot," I added. "Of course."

"Come on now, Sendie," Greta said, with some annoyance. "You know as well as I do that it was not an accident. Fitz and Dirk made sure that Rainer and Beck didn't come to your office. They set it up so that those two young men would be killed. They did it. Deliberately."

This was, as far as I could tell from what the Horsemen had told me, pretty much the truth. Van Bergen-Aarts and Fitz had indeed arranged it so that the Seabrooks would do what they did, and then Fitz, as General Witt, had made sure it

happened. But it was an ugly story and an ugly way to remember our friend, and I was surprised that Greta knew.

"Those were ugly times, Greta," I said. "You know that as well as I do. We did ugly things in the war. Bad things. Things we don't want to remember."

I paused.

"All of us. Including you," I said, thinking about the stories she'd told me of her time in the resistance — like the way she executed the man they originally thought was a traitor to their cell. Up close. Shot to the head. The wrong man.

"Yes," she answered, interrupting my reverie. "We did ugly things. All of us. But that's not why I am angry at Fitzpatrick. I am angry because he knew. He knew about Rainer and his friend and he didn't say anything. Afterwards. He kept it secret."

"But we all kept secrets after the war, Greta," I said. "You too. Me. Van Bergen-Aarts. Even Kugelman, who wasn't even in the Army. He kept secrets too."

"What do you mean?"

"It's hard to explain," I said. "And it doesn't matter that much. A really complicated story about working with the Reds after the war, and Israel, and weapons. Honestly. Like a spy story."

"One thing, though: Freddie would be happy to know that it was the opposite of what she thought. Kugelman was helping the Israelis, not running from them. That's what he was trying to cover up, in fact."

"So it wasn't 'the Jews'." I made air quotes, just like Marty would.

"No," Greta answered firmly. "Not that. I ask, 'What do you mean' about me?"

You said I had secrets. What secrets have I kept?"

"Oh, it's nothing like that," I answered, realizing I'd put my foot in it. "Nothing, really. Nothing terrible."

"Like what?" she asked again, even more firmly. "What is my secret?"

I took a long pause.

"Honestly, Greta. I'd rather not say. I'm glad you're visiting me. You're my closest friend. It's not a bad thing. I never should have said anything. If there's one thing you learn in my business, it's that everybody has secrets, both good and bad."

"Now! Sendie!" Greta said. "Stop with this babble. What did you mean when you said that I have a secret from the war?"

"Well," I began, choosing my words carefully. "It's about you and Fitz. And Tini. But a good secret. One of the only good things from the war, to be honest. And something good to remember about Fitz, even with all the terrible things he — we all — had to do."

She looked at me, waiting.

"The father," I said. "Fitz standing up and saying that he was Tini's father."

She continued to look at me. Not saying anything.

"You and him. We all thought Tini was his. The two of you kept that secret."

Silence.

"That there was somebody else. Nobody knew that."

Greta continued to look at me.

"But it was a good secret, right? In those days?"

"You did not know this?" Greta asked after another long pause. "You did not know that Fitz was not Tini's father? Did he never tell you? Did you never work it out?"

"Well, Marty," I began. Greta looked at me, not understanding. "That girl reporter I was telling you about, Marty Fordham." That helped Greta place her.

"She was just telling me how men don't really think these things through," I explained.

"So. No," I admitted after a moment. "I didn't realize that Fitz wasn't Tini's father and he never told me."

"I did not mean about Fitz," Greta answered. "I mean about who Tini's father was. Did you never work that out? Even now, when everything is in the papers?"

"What do you mean?" I said. "There's been nothing about Tini in the papers."

"Rainer," Greta said. "It was Rainer. He and I were lovers. In the war. Tini is his daughter. I was pregnant when I met you and Fitz. With Rainer's daughter. Rainer is Tini's father."

I felt the blood rush to my head. My ears grew warm. I could feel my scalp under my hair. No, I didn't know.

"I...", I began, stumbling for words. "I... I don't know what to say, Greta. No, I didn't know. Fitz never told me."

I thought back suddenly to that first night, in the Gardens. And to his explanation at the party. Why he didn't want me talking to Greta about the case. Because it would "worry her."

"Did Fitz know?" I asked Greta. "Who the father was, I mean?"

"I thought he was just protecting you. Moffenhoer."

Greta flinched.

"Sorry," I said, realizing my mistake. "I meant, protecting your reputation. Trees heeft een canadese."

"Like that was much better," Greta answered, a slight bitterness in her voice.

"Well, they weren't shaving Trees's head, anyway," I answered, more roughly than I meant.

"Yes," Greta said, ignoring my last comment. "Fitz knew. He knew that I'd had a lover. He knew that he'd gone missing in the last days of the war. He knew that he was from the safe house. He knew his name. He knew I didn't know what happened to him, but also that I thought he might have been killed in the shootouts from those last crazy days."

It was my turn to look at her.

"Fitz knew, Sendie. He even knew that when Rainer went out, it was to find the Canadians. To alert them to something. That he was going to Field Security when he went missing."

I sat still. Trying to understand.

"But that means," I began.

"That means Fitz knew that I did *not* know," Greta answered bitterly. "And he kept quiet about it."

She paused.

"And it means, Sendie," she began again. "It means that Fitz killed Rainer. The father of my child."

She paused. And then, with a bitter emphasis: “And *he did not tell me.*”

Another pause.

“Fitz knew I thought that Rainer was missing. He told me that he was looking for him. That you all were. And Fitz knew the whole time that Rainer was dead. Because Fitz had had him shot. And Dirk. They had him executed. By the Kutmoffen. *After* the godverdomme war. While he was with me.”

I was pretty sure that last part wasn’t true, but this didn’t seem like the time to raise it. Rainer was dead before May 13 and we had only met Greta socially — I mean, outside of Civil Affairs — a week or so later. So, really, Fitz had had Rainer killed before he and Greta started dating.

But it felt like a pedantic point. One whose value might not be immediately obvious in the context.

“I... I don’t know what to say,” I said after a moment. “When I found out that Fitz wasn’t Tini’s dad — I mean, her real dad. I mean... Well, you know what I mean. When I found out that Fitz had said the child was his, even though it couldn’t have been, I thought it was a stand-up thing to do. He was protecting you.

“But this.” I stopped, gathered my thoughts. “But this...”

Suddenly I had it.

“But this, Greta,” I said, more enthusiastically. “I guess I can see why he did it, right? It’s gotta be hard when you realize you’re falling in love with the girl of somebody you’ve just had to kill, right?”

I was gathering steam.

“I mean, it was the war. And then after. How often does that not happen today?

You meet somebody in the street. He's German. What did you do to him? What did he do to you? We can't go round explaining everything to everybody all the time.

"I can see why it would be hard. I can see how he wouldn't say 'Hey, Greta, about this boyfriend of yours from the war...'"

"I was not German, Sendie," Greta said. "And Rainer was killed *because* he went to you. The Canadians. It is not the same thing. He was killed for not being German enough. For not being enough of an enemy."

I didn't know what to say. We sat and looked at each other.

"I'm so sorry, Greta," I said at last. "I didn't know. At all. Any of it."

We drank from our cups again and tried to move the conversation on to other topics. Tini was back home. Freddie was doing fine back in Amsterdam. Nymphaea was watching the business with Derek Williamson, a streetman I'd hired a few years back.

Finally it was time for her to leave. I walked with her to the door. We kissed goodbye.

"I am so sorry," Greta said after we kissed. "I thought you knew. At least some of it."

"I didn't," I said. "I can see now why you are bitter."

I watched her head down the stairs and went back into the apartment.

I had a lot to think about.

Chapter 70

Finally, it was Tuesday. The day of the big game. Tonight was the Leafs' last chance to get things done before another Thursday rolled around. I slept in a little, then turned again to the papers.

The *Globe* was surprisingly quiet about the game. The front page was all about the coroner testifying at an inquest, bags of dried milk that had gone bad in India, robberies, police shootings, and a redhead in Yorkville who got caught selling LSD to earn money for the prom. It wasn't until you got to the third section that you got the sports, and even then only on the second page. Better not jinx it was the feeling, I guess.

The stuff was what you'd expect: Punch Imlach saying for the Leafs that the team speaks for itself on the ice. Toe Blake telling us for Montreal that home-ice advantage doesn't matter until Game Seven. A couple of columnists marvelling that the boys in blue ever made it this far this season.

I turned the page and just about had a heart attack: "Out of the hospital, Conacher said 'doing very well'."

Conacher? In hospital? I didn't even realize he was hurt, let alone that he was coming out of the hospital. And what was this doing on page thirty-three! Conacher had got a point in almost every game this playoffs and was a major reason why the Leafs were where they were. It should be page-one news instead of stuck between something about the baseball rankings and something else about the Kentucky

Derby.

I'd seen the game, and I was sure he'd left the ice skating. I wasn't that doped up.

Turned out they meant the other Conacher, the uncle. "The Train." He'd had throat cancer. There was a successful operation. Feeling good. Out of the hospital. Doing well.

I'm really glad for him, but I'm also glad it's him and not the one we need on the ice tonight.

Yeah, I know. I should be more compassionate. But it's the Stanley Cup and that excuses a lot of sins.

I'd just finished the paper when the doorbell rang. I wasn't expecting anybody, so I pressed the button on the intercom. It was Nymphea.

"Sandy," she said through the speaker. "I have something here I think you should see."

Nymphea and Derek had been running the office while I was in hospital and now that I was at home recuperating. She'd dropped by the hospital every couple of days to bring me my personal mail and keep me up to date with how the business was going. For the most part, she said, they seemed to have things under control. A couple of clients had been a bit uneasy — Nymphea, of course, is a woman, and Derek is a negro, and you still have people who don't want to work with either. But there wasn't too much trouble that way and you're probably better off without the clients who do mind, anyway.

I'd been expecting maybe a phone call from her today, since I'd last heard from

her on Friday. So it was a bit of a surprise to see her this morning, at my door. I buzzed her in and went out into the hall to wait for her.

She came up the stairs at a jog and turned immediately toward my door. She'd been here before, of course, at the party where she'd met Edie.

It was drizzling this morning as well but cooler, and Nymphaea was dressed for the weather. She had on a yellow mackintosh-type jacket with a nor'wester rain hat, some Wellingtons, and an umbrella. I hung up her items as she removed her boots after coming through the door.

"I headed up here as quickly as I could," she said as she sat down on the couch. I went into the kitchen and put the kettle on.

"I thought you should see this," she said when I came out, holding out a couple of pages of what looked like airmail paper in her hand.

I walked over to her and took the papers.

"They're from Greta," she said as I sat down in the armchair beside her. "She brought them in this morning."

I started to read. It was a letter from Greta to me. Dated yesterday.

"Have you read this?" I asked Nymphaea after I got to the end.

She nodded. "She gave them to me exactly like that," she said. "Not even folded. I had the impression she wanted me to read them."

"What was she doing downtown?"

"Well, she came in looking for you. I think she thought maybe you were back at work."

I thought for a moment.

"How long ago was this?" I asked. "When's the flight?"

"I don't know," Nymphaea answered. "About the flight, I mean. Greta was in the office maybe an hour ago. I came here right away after I read what she'd written.

"I left Anne in charge," she added conscientiously.

"Do you know how to drive?" I asked. She nodded. I walked over to the credenza beside the front door and pulled out my car keys. I threw them over to her.

"Here," I said. "It's the black Lincoln outside, just up the street, on the other side. I need you to take me to the airport."

Nymphaea said she'd grab the car and wait for me at the front door to the Rookery. While she was out, I struggled into my overcoat. I went to the closet and kicked out some penny loafers. They weren't great for the rain, but I didn't have the time to try some tie-ons.

The Lincoln was standing in the street in front of the building when I came out. Nymphaea leaned over and pushed open the door on my side as I started toward her. Then she put the car in park and came out as well, running around to my side. I could feel the stitches in my calf and back as I walked.

"Let's get going," I said as she closed the door behind me.

Nymphaea drove to the corner and looked at me. "Which way?"

"Left," I said. "Left. We gotta get up to the Bypass. Out to the airport."

The airport is out in Malton, just outside the city limits, to the north and west of downtown. Which is good for the people who live here, I guess, since it means there's lots of room to grow and we don't have the flights coming over our houses

all day and all night. But it also makes it hard to get there in a hurry. The subway doesn't go anywhere near it, and until they finish building the expressway up Spadina, there's no real way of getting out there except by zigzagging your way through the city up to the Bypass, then taking that out to the new airport expressway. A lot faster than it used to be, but still thirty to forty minutes from my place, even outside of rush hour. And Nymphaea, I could see, was a careful driver. So let's add another ten to fifteen.

"How do you even get to Amsterdam?" I asked as we drove round Upper Canada College.

"I asked Anne to check before I left," Nymphaea said. "Maybe Air Canada? Or the Dutch Airlines? We can call her at the office when we get to the airport."

As it turns out, we were at the new terminal within forty minutes. Nymphaea turned into the parking entrance and we headed under the tarmac. A jet was taxiing above us as we went under. An impressive sight.

The boom lifted and Nymphaea drove straight to the glass doors of the elevator atrium.

"Wait here somewhere until I get back," I said to her, slamming the car door with my better arm and running for the elevators. I pulled the heavy glass door open, feeling the now-familiar tear under my right shoulder blade, and pushed the button impatiently.

"It doesn't do anything after the first time you push it." I looked up. A woman was standing beside me, waiting for the elevator. Middle-aged. She was in what looked like a woollen checked skirt and jacket, with a beret. In my haste and excitement, I

hadn't seen her standing there.

"Yeah. You're right," I said sheepishly. "Sorry."

"Oh, it doesn't do anything bad," she said, chuckling. She pointed at my sling and cast with a tilt of her head. "I just don't want you pulling anything for no good reason."

The elevator arrived and she pushed the departures level for me. She was going to arrivals. We stopped at her floor and she got out. I looked but there was no "close doors" button. The doors seemed to take forever. I guess they let them stay open longer at the airport. For the baggage, maybe.

Finally they closed and I went up to the last floor. When they opened, I ran out, nearly knocking over one of the airport cleaners who was waiting to go back down.

"Hey," he yelled at me. "Watch where you going, man!"

I looked back at him and made a surrender sign with my good arm. "Sorry," I mouthed quickly before turning my head back to the direction I was running.

The Aeroquay in Toronto is a big new building that replaced the old field house a couple of years ago. You come in through an underground parking garage where you drive right under the runway. The airport proper — the bit where you buy the tickets, drop off or pick up your baggage, and head to the gates — is built in the form of a gigantic two-storey circle, like a kind of tube almost. In the middle there's a square multi-storey parking garage topped by some airport offices and then, on top of the circle, a restaurant. The bottom storey in the circle is the arrivals area; the top storey is departures and the observation deck. The airline ticket desks are on the inside wall of the circle; the gates along the outer. It's really convenient.

I ran out and looked up at the main departures board. It listed the upcoming flights, and I looked for something to Amsterdam. Nothing. I looked up and down the hallway but couldn't see any desk for KLM, the Dutch airline. I ran over to the international desk for Air Canada.

"Do you guys fly to Amsterdam?" I asked the woman closest to me behind the counter. She was talking to another traveller and ignored me.

"Excuse me," I said again, more insistent. "I'm really sorry, but this is important. Do you fly to Amsterdam?"

She turned to look at me, as did the person she was talking to.

"If you could just wait..." she began.

I turned to the customer she was talking to. A young man, dressed expensively. A lawyer or banker.

"It's about a lady friend of mine," I began, addressing him. "I just need to find out if she could have gone to Amsterdam from here today. Is it alright if I bud in line here for a sec?"

"Sure, sure!" he said with a smile. "For a lady friend, I can wait a second."

I turned to the woman behind the counter again. "Amsterdam," I said. "If I had to go to Amsterdam today. What would I do?"

"Well," she began, looking at me. "Our flight's tomorrow, so you couldn't take that." She paused, thinking. "A lot of people catch the KLM flight out of Montreal," she said, looking at her watch. "But I think you're too late for the connection today. I think the KLM is at 6 p.m., and the next flight to Montreal wouldn't get you there on time."

"When was the last flight that would?" I asked.

"That'd be the 2 p.m.," she answered.

I looked at my watch. It was five to two.

"You mean like now?" I asked. The woman nodded.

"Where do I catch it?"

"Gate 3," she said. "But it's too late. They've boarded by now."

I looked up for the gate signs. The fastest way to Gate 3 was through the middle, along one of the spokes that crossed under the central admin building.

I ran down one of the hallways, through to where the gates were. Only a couple of people were left, lined up to show their tickets to the lady at the entrance to the air bridge. One of them was a tall blond woman. Greta.

I ran a few more steps toward the gate and then called.

"Greta!"

All around me, people turned to stare. I took another couple of steps. "Greta!" I called again.

Greta turned to look for me. She stepped to the side out of the way of the last passengers heading down the air bridge, behind a rope barrier.

"Greta!" I called one last time as I arrived at the gate.

"Sendie," Greta called back. Two women in Air Canada uniforms started walking toward us simultaneously. It was not the first time they'd had a drama at the gate.

The first woman reached where Greta was standing. "We need to finish boarding," she began. She touched Greta lightly on the arm and started directing her toward the bridge.

"Sir?" The second woman had arrived at my side and touched me on my right arm, pulling slightly. "I'm afraid they have to go now," she said kindly.

"He knew, Sendie," Greta said over her shoulder as the stewardess guided her through the door to the bridge. "He did it. He knew. And he didn't say. I had no choice."

I turned to my stewardess. "I want to buy a ticket."

"I'm sorry?" she asked.

"For the flight?" I said, pointing to the air bridge. "I want to buy a ticket."

"You can't, sir. It's already leaving."

"Where would you buy it?" I asked. "If you still could?"

"Out front," she began to answer. "By the ticket office. But it's too late. We're almost finished boarding and we're running late as it is."

"Wait here!" I said, tearing away from her and running back the way I came, through the spoke and toward the Air Canada desk. The woman I had been talking to ten minutes ago was still talking to the same lawyer. Flirting.

"Where do I buy a ticket?" I yelled to her as I came up to the desk. "I need to buy a ticket to Montreal right now."

"There's a flight every hour," she said, annoyed. The lawyer stepped back to let me in, a smile on his lips again. The woman looked at her watch. "The next one will be about 3 p.m."

"That's too late," I shouted. "I need to be on this one. The one at the gate right now!"

"It's too late," she said. "I'm sure it's already boarded. It should be gone by now."

"They were boarding just a minute ago," I said. "Where can I buy a ticket?"

"It's too late, sir," she said again, firmly. "You can't buy a ticket for that flight."

"Where?" I shouted again.

"Over there," she said, pointing across the hallway at a small cubby. "The ticket office is there. But it's too late."

I ran across the hallway. A woman was sitting at the desk. She'd been reading a book before the disturbance I was causing caught her eye. Now she was watching me. Waiting.

I stepped up to the desk, out of breath.

"Montreal," I said, cutting off her greeting. "I need to be on the plane to Montreal. Right now."

"The next flight is at 3 p.m.," the woman began, putting a ticket-blank in her typewriter. "It'll cost \$150."

"I mean the one now," I said. "The one boarding right now."

"That flight will be gone by now, sir," she said. "It's ten after."

"I saw them not five minutes ago," I said. "I was just there."

"It's gone," she said. "I promise."

She picked up the telephone and spun the dial twice. "Holly?" she said after it was answered. "I have a gentleman here who would like to be on Flight 32. Can he still catch it?"

She nodded as the answer came back. Then she put down the horn.

"As I said, sir, the flight is gone. I was just speaking to the clerk at the gate. She closed the door five minutes ago."

She pointed back the way I came. "If you hurry, you might be able to see it from the observation deck," she said.

"And there's still plenty of time if you want to buy a ticket on the next flight."

She paused.

"Which leaves at three," she said, with finality.

Chapter 71

I ran back through the central hub and out to the observation deck. A half-dozen Air Canada planes were at the gates or taxiing on the tarmac, and I realized it was futile trying to figure out which one was going to Montreal. Not that it mattered, of course. Greta was on it. And she was on her way to Montreal to catch the flight to Amsterdam. At six this evening.

Watching her leave wouldn't change anything.

"Breakup?" a man's voice asked. It was the lawyer from the check-in counter. I was leaning on the railing of the observation deck, looking out over the tarmac. The lawyer leaned in, mirroring my position.

"That's rough," he said kindly. "It's a sad way to say goodbye."

We stared at the tarmac together. Silently.

"Say," the lawyer said after a minute. "Can I buy you a drink? My flight's not for another hour, and you look like you could use some company."

I didn't feel like company, but I didn't have the energy to argue. And I did feel like a drink. So I let him guide me back into the terminal and up to the Aeroquay lounge. It was less than half full and we had our pick of tables. He walked me over to a small two-hander, in front of a large modern mural.

"Not a fan of modern art," he said as we sat down, nodding in the direction of the mural. "I always wonder why they don't paint things you can recognize — like a house, or a cat, or a farm. Or an airplane, I guess, since we're at an airport."

I didn't have any strong feelings about modern art today and so said nothing.

The waiter came by, and my lawyer friend ordered a martini for each of us. Doubles. "You look like you need a stiff one," he said by way of explanation.

We sat in silence until the waiter returned with the drinks.

"Chin-chin!" he said, throwing his martini back. I picked mine up and pulled the olives off their stick.

"That's the spirit," he said as I took a sip. "There's nothing that can't be helped by alcohol, I always say."

We sat some more in silence.

I was wondering what I could do to get rid of him when I heard a woman's voice. "Sandy!" It was Nymphaea.

I looked up. She was standing at the entrance to the lounge, waving at me.

The lawyer turned to look. He turned back to me and gave me a lewd grin.

"Well, there's no flies on you, my friend," he said, raising his empty glass in mock salute. "Do they have to get a number? Or do you take them on the honour system?"

Nymphaea had arrived at our table by this point.

"I've been looking all over for you," she began. "I parked the car downstairs and came up. They told me at the front counter to look on the observation deck and then I guessed you might be here."

I nodded at the lawyer.

"Thanks for the drink and the company," I said, knocking back the last of my martini. "My secretary and I better get back to work." I put an emphasis on

secretary.

"Ah yes," he said, looking Nymphaea up and down. "Well, you know 'secretaries,'" — there were air quotes in his voice — "gotta stay on top of them."

He winked.

"Pig," Nymphaea replied, red-faced. She turned to me. "Let's go, Sandy. Let me get you home." She looked at the lawyer again and added, with contempt in her voice: "There's nothing more we can do here."

I let her take me back down in the elevator and out to my car. She put me in the passenger seat and then went round to the driver side. She drove out, stopping at the booth to pay, and then out again, under the tarmac, until we were back on the airport expressway.

"Not home, Nymphaea," I said. "I don't think I could take it, sitting with Edie and Mabel this evening. Let's go find a motel or something."

"I can drop you off somewhere, Sandy," Nymphaea began carefully.

"I mean for me," I said, cutting her off after realizing that you could take what I just said the wrong way, especially after the lascivious lawyer in the airport lounge. "I don't feel like spending time with my neighbours, and I don't want to hang out in some bar. I'd like to find somewhere where I can sit on my own with a couple of beers and think for a bit."

She drove back on the Bypass to Avenue Road.

"Muir Park?" she asked. "The Regency? Park Plaza? Where do you want to go?"

We decided on the Regency, since it wasn't that far away from my place or from

the office. Nymphaea would drop me off, then take the car home with her. I could catch up with her at the office the next day, or she could drop it off at my place in the evening. She let me off at the curb and waited while I got a room for the night. I came back out and waved her off.

Chapter 72

We got to the Regency about 6:00 p.m., and I fell across the bed as soon as I got in my room.

I was out for about an hour.

I called the desk for room service. A chop, some beer, and a mickey of rye. They brought it around 7:30 p.m.

I ate my dinner and drank my beer. I was in a back room, which looked out over the houses in Hazelton Lane. It was getting closer to sunset, and since I was looking east, the hotel was casting a shadow in the yards of the houses. I got up and went to the window.

Finally, I decided, it was time. I went back to the small round table beside the bed and sat down. I reached into my jacket pocket and pulled out Greta's letter. I poured myself a drink and began to read.

It was dated May 1. Last night. She must have written it after she visited me at my apartment that evening.

Lieve Sandy, it began.

You were saying that in the war we all did things we are ashamed of, or that we don't want to talk about.

That is also true for me, although you know almost all my secrets from those days when you interrogated me after the war. I was honest with you then, just like I am being honest with you now.

What you didn't say this afternoon though was how it was different in those days. We all did terrible things but we did them together. You were a soldier in an army. When you did things, you did them because those were your orders. As terrible as they were, you knew that they were what you had to do. Like all the soldiers in your company or regiment.

In the resistance, we were also like soldiers in an army. We also had to do terrible things because we were ordered to, and we also had companions-in-arms who had to do the same kinds of terrible things.

This was always a comfort to me. No matter how bad it was, you were acting because you were part of something bigger and because you had friends and companions who relied on you and could understand.

I am writing this to you now because I need that same kind of companionship. But in peace, and in Canada, we don't have that as easily. It is now the 1960s, not the 1940s, and we are older and we should be at peace. We don't all have to do terrible things and if we do, we don't always have somebody who understands what we did and why we had to do it.

By now, I think, you probably know. Fitzpatrick and Dirk. Freddie Cooper and me. We killed them. We did it together.

I don't know if you realized it this afternoon, but I can't imagine you don't know it by now. I thought that I could see you were beginning to understand before I left.

We killed them because they killed Rainer, my lover and Freddie's brother, and the father of my daughter and Freddie's niece. You said that in the war we had to do lots of bad things and that we couldn't fight that war forever here in this new

land. You are right, but what do you do when that war is not over? When the people are not trying to get on with their lives but keep fighting? Keep lying and hiding things? Even the Jews got justice after the war. At Nuremberg and in Jerusalem. What about us? Where is our justice?

When I read in the newspaper what had happened to Rainer all those years ago, I was sick to my stomach. This was especially true when it became clear, after you met Dirk that evening at our house, that Fitzpatrick and Dirk were somehow involved and somehow had caused his death.

This was betrayal. When you and me and Fitzpatrick met after the war, Fitz knew that I had lost Rainer. He pretended to help me look for him. He pretended that he was checking at Civil Affairs and at Field Security. He pretended that he was asking after him. This was also how I first met Dirk. Fitz brought him to me as somebody from the security service who could help me discover if my lover was still alive. He did this to court me. But he knew it was a lie even as he told me. And for the next twenty years. They both lied to me. About the father of my child.

I am telling you this because there is no resistance anymore. Nobody to share my hurt with and the bad things I had to do. You have always been a comrade to me and this is why I am telling you. I have to share with somebody.

I will leave it up to you what you do with this. By the time you read this, I will be on my way to Amsterdam. I am going to visit with Freddie, see my old home, find myself again. I will return in one month. When I come back, I will know what you have decided to do. If the police are there, waiting for me, then I will know that you have done the right thing for the times that we live in now and you will have

reported the murders to the authorities. I will not be angry with you because this too was a horrible thing and it is peace, not war.

But I hope that it will be you, Sandy, who is waiting for me. I hope that you will understand that I have done the right thing for the past, for the times that we lived in then. That I have done something that was not "right" but was just.

The police think that Kugelman and his men killed Fitzpatrick and Dirk because they were involved with them. With this letter, you have the proof that they did not.

I leave it in your hands, Sandy, what needs to be done. I leave the final decision in your hands. I am writing this because like in the war, I had to tell somebody. Except unlike in the war there is nobody to tell.

Except you.

—Greta.

Chapter 73

I woke up the next morning about ten. I'd finished the mickey. The letter and my glass, with a half-shot in the bottom, sat on the table. The chair I'd been sitting in was on its back on the floor. I was lying diagonally, in my clothes, across the outer bedspread. I still had my shoes on. I guess I must have got up at some point, stumbled across to the bed and fallen asleep before I could strip off or get under the sheets.

I took a quick shower. I didn't have any change of clothes, or toiletries, or anything really, other than what was in the room. So I did my best to spruce myself up with what I had before heading down to the checkout.

"Great game, huh?" the clerk said as I handed over my key. He was a young man, with collar-length blond hair, combed to look a little more respectable than it actually was. Hippie-with-a-day-job.

"Missed it, I'm afraid. Fell asleep."

"Oh, man! How could you do that? The Stanley Cup!"

"In from the airport," I said, not quite lying. "You know how that is."

"Yeah, man," the clerk answered. "I hear ya. But what a game! I can't believe you missed it!"

We were starting to go in circles, I could see.

"The good guys won?" I asked.

"Three-one, man. Three-one," the clerk answered.

"Sawchuk?" I asked.

"Yeah, but amazing," the clerk confirmed. "He was amazing!"

I paid the bill and went out into the street. I was hungover and my mouth was dry. But I also felt elated. We'd won. I'd missed the game, but we'd won. The Stanley Cup.

It was cool outside. Low forties, it felt like, and cloudy. I started walking south, figuring I'd go into the office first before catching the subway back up or taking a cab. A couple of doors down I came across a café. El Matador. They were open for breakfast still, and I figured a coffee wouldn't do any harm.

I wasn't through the door when the counter jockey called out.

"Whadda game, huh?"

"Yeah, I heard," I said. "Leafs won, right?"

"Damn straight," he answered. "Three-one. Didn't you see it?"

I didn't feel like explaining again. So I sat down at the bar silently. He stepped over toward me.

"I can't believe you didn't see it. Sawchuk was great."

"Yeah, I heard. He was great."

Having got that out of the way, I ordered a coffee and some toast and jam. My stomach felt a bit iffy, and I wasn't sure I could face something heavier.

A copy of the *Globe* was lying open on the counter. I pulled it over to me. The front page had a picture of the Leafs celebrating a goal, with the Gump lying face down on the ice. Otherwise, it was all political: the Americans sending more troops to Vietnam, the Brits deciding they want in the Common Market after all. Shulman

still going on about how the world was out to get him. And a grocery store clerk waving a gun around.

I turned to the sports pages.

Well, they weren't lying to me, anyway. The Leafs won. The Cup was ours. Sawchuk was great. I took a quick look at the box score: nothing in the first, two for Toronto in the second. Montreal got one back in the third, and then Armstrong, of all people, put in the third. 19:13. Empty-netter, I'm guessing. Looks like a fast game too. A couple of cross-checking and elbowing penalties, but no fights. Only one interference. I closed the paper. I really wasn't feeling good.

"Here you go," the jockey said, putting a plate with toast in front of me. "Want me to warm that up for you?" He pointed at my coffee, which he must have put it down when I wasn't looking. I shook my head and took a sip. I could feel the caffeine rushing through my blood.

"No, that's good," I said. "Just keep filling it when it gets low."

I spread some jam on the toast and took a bite. It would stay down.

I sat like that for about fifteen minutes: a sip of coffee, bite of toast and jam, sip of coffee. The coffee jock kept coming by, topping up my cup as he passed.

Finally, I felt like I could face the world. I paid and headed out into the street. I patted the outside of my jacket. The letter was still there.

I crossed Bloor and went down the steps to Museum station. I was originally going to walk but was feeling miserable enough to take the two stops down to Osgoode. Finally, I arrived at the Temple. I took the elevator up to the fifth floor and pushed open the office door.

Nymphea was on the phone. She looked up at me as I came in and told whoever she was talking to that she needed to go. As I took my hat off and started to put it on the rack, she jumped up from behind her desk and hopped quickly behind me, opening the door to my office for me.

"In you go, Sandy," she said quietly, concern in her voice. "Let me get Anne out, and then I'll come in and join you."

She closed the door behind me and I could hear some muffled voices, opening and closing of doors. A minute or so later, the door opened and Nymphea stepped through, closing it carefully and softly behind her. She started to speak.

"I know," I answered, cutting her off. "It was a great game."

She looked at me.

"The Leafs. They won the Cup, I hear. Sawchuk was great."

"Oh," she said, still looking at me.

"You heard that, right? I mean, you know the Leafs won the Stanley Cup?"

"Yes," she answered quietly again. "Yes, I know."

"It was Sawchuk," I said. "They all say that it was Sawchuk who won it for them. Nothing could get by him. The Habs couldn't buy a goal."

"I suppose. I don't really know much about hockey."

"And the old guys. I mean, he's like forty or something. And Armstrong. And Bower. A lot of them are really old. In their forties, you know. Or late thirties, anyway."

"I didn't know that," Nymphea answered. She'd moved over to the desk by now and sat on the edge, still looking at me.

"Is that old?" she asked. "For hockey, I mean."

"Yeah," I said. "It's old. Don't trust anyone over thirty, right?"

"In hockey, you mean?"

"Anywhere, I think they mean," I said. "Anybody. Anytime. Anywhere. Anybody over thirty."

"What are you going to do?" she asked, changing the subject.

"About what?" I knew what she meant, but I didn't want to acknowledge it.

She looked over her shoulder at the door and then got up and went back over to it. She opened it a crack and put her head through.

"I asked Anne to leave us alone," she said when she came back to the desk. She pointed with her head up to where the microphone is for our dictation machine. "And to keep the machine off."

We paused.

"Do you know what you're going to do?" she asked again.

I reached into my pocket and pulled out the blue sheets of airmail paper. I held them in my hand. With the other, I pushed down on the desk lighter. I held the corner of the paper over the flame and let it catch. I waited until there was a good flame and then laid it in the ashtray.

"Well, this, for one thing," I said. "Kugelman tried to kill me. And before that, he killed Fitz and Van Bergen-Aarts, the cops tell me. It's good to have him off the street."

"It is," Nymphaea said.

"So I don't see any point in ruining it for them. It's a good story. Everybody's

happy with it. The good guys won.”

“Yeah,” she said. “The good guys won.”

“What about you?” I asked.

“What?”

“What are you going to do about it? The letter? What you heard?”

“What letter?” Nympha asked.

We looked at the ashtray.

“Like you said, Sandy. The good guys won.”

She stood up from the desk.

“You know, Mr. Sanderson,” she said after a minute, walking over to the door. “I think it’s still too early for you to be at work. Why don’t you take today off as well, and see how you are tomorrow?”

“Celebrate the win,” she continued. “It’s a big deal, winning the Cup like that, isn’t it?”

“It is,” I answered. “You never know when they’ll do it again.”

“Oh,” she said. “I’m not sure they’ll ever do it again. Not that group anyway. They’re really old, you were telling me. Maybe their playing days are behind them.”

“Yeah,” I said. “That’s what they say. There’s going to be twelve teams next year, you know. A huge expansion. Twice as many as they got now. It just won’t be the same anymore. It won’t be just the same small group of people each week, going back and forth.”

“New blood,” Nympha said. “Always a good thing.”

“Yeah,” I agreed. “Always.”

Chapter 74

By the time June 3 rolled around – a month after Greta left for home – I was feeling a lot better. My left shoulder was still sore where the bullet had gone through. But otherwise I was in pretty good shape.

We'd decided, after I came back, that I'd slow down a bit. I was only fifty, but Nymphaea and Derek had done so well running the shop while I was out of action, we decided to go partners. We hadn't thought about how we'd rearrange the office space yet, but we figured that what we really needed was a group of people. Toronto was growing and it wasn't always the guys like me — or, maybe better said, the guys like Fitz — who needed the people like me. They still mostly ran the insurance companies and the department stores and they were still mostly the lawyers and the bankers. But the day when it was just them and me was beginning to change. Not just the same people, week after week.

Greta had shown that. Nymphaea was showing that. And her father, with his restaurant. Anne and Derek. None of them had been in the Army. Or the war. Or, else, like Nymphaea's father, they had been in the war and they wanted to put it behind them. To come to this new country and live in peace. Leave the old behind. Get on with the new.

June 3 was a Saturday. Greta's flight was at noon, so I had a little while before I had to leave.

It was a bad news day at the *Globe*. The Israelis and Syrians trading artillery,

just like Van Bergen-Aarts had predicted. A fourteen-year-old boy wanted for shooting a cop. A child drowned at the exhibition grounds because his playmate didn't want to admit they were playing in the water. The Red Chinese were threatening the Americans in Vietnam and the British in Hong Kong. Armstrong — the guy who closed out the scoring for the Leafs in the final game of the season — was quitting hockey. He didn't want to be traded to some new city in the expansion draft.

And then, on page four, some new news on the execution story. Or rather old news. The Canadian government had finally given the Germans its report on what had happened to Beck and Dorfer after the war, though it wasn't clear when they'd done it. "A few months ago," the paper says, "we gave them our version of the events."

"And there the matter rests."

The Germans are waiting for permission to conduct investigations in Canada, it seems. But the Canadians are not planning on allowing it any time soon. "Procedural problems might arise," the paper's "sources" said, "if the Germans ask for anything as formal as a hearing on Canadian Territory."

About eleven, I went down to the street and got my car. I took a leisurely drive out to the airport, arriving about noon. I took my time parking, and it wasn't until about 12:15 that I got to the arrivals hallway, outside the baggage area.

A glass wall separated the luggage carousels from the people waiting to pick up their friends and family. It was mostly opaque, with a kind of frosting that meant you couldn't see more than shapes moving on the other side. Silhouettes that

could be anybody, really. Every so often, the doors would slide open and some passengers would appear, carrying their luggage with them. A couple of businessmen. A young woman on her own. A small family.

The frequency with which the door opened and closed picked up and then began to slow down again. Most of the passengers, it seemed, were already through. They were standing around me, hugging and shaking hands. Talking and laughing. No sign of Greta.

Then I saw a lone shadow behind the glass, as it made its way to the exit. It was carrying a heavy suitcase and moving slowly.

The door slid open and there she was, Greta. She stepped through the opening and put down her bag, looking around. Tired.

I was standing behind a large extended family, who were still greeting each other. Grandchildren being lifted up for kisses and pinched cheeks. The new generation.

I waved, but her glance had passed by me and she was looking now in the wrong direction.

"Greta," I shouted, stepping out from behind the others, waving my arm and hoping she would see me.

She turned and saw me, framed in the door opening. As beautiful as ever.

"Sendie," she said, smiling.

Canada Gives Its Version of Execution of Germans

By Lewis Seale (Special to the *Globe and Mail*)

Ottawa — The German Embassy here has been given what is called the Canadian version of the 1945 execution of two German seamen in a Canadian-supervised prisoner-of-war camp.

The incident is being investigated by the public prosecutor of Cologne, Christoph Vonderbank, reportedly with a view to laying murder charges against two German officers who were involved.

The executions took place near Amsterdam under German military law a few days after the end of the war.

An account of the incident in the German magazine *Der Spiegel* last September and news of the investigation sparked a political storm in Canada.

Defence Minister Paul Hellyer defended the Canadian Army in the Commons against accusations of improperly permitting the executions. He said that restrictions on German disciplinary procedures were not received by the Canadians until after the executions.

At the same time, Mr. Hellyer pledged what he called all appropriate cooperation to German authorities if they sought assistance in their investigations.

A few months ago, officials of the German Embassy here approached the External Affairs Department to ask what information the Canadian Government had

and what help they could expect.

"We gave them our version of the facts and assurance of our cooperation," an External Affairs Department spokesman said this week.

There the matter rests; the spokesman said Mr. Vonderbank's investigation is apparently proceeding, but there had been no further requests from the embassy for information or assistance.

A spokesman for the German Embassy said he could report nothing about dealings with the Canadian Government because the matter is not yet closed.

Another German magazine, *Der stern*, reported recently that Mr. Vonderbank is waiting for permission to carry on his investigations in Canada. It said the next move was up to the Canadians, who have not showed what it called any great inclination to meet Mr. Vonderbank's wish.

Informants in the External Affairs and Defence departments indicated that procedural problems might arise if the Germans asked for anything as formal as a hearing on Canadian territory.

But evidence could be gathered in other ways, and it would be up to the Germans to decide for themselves if it were acceptable.

The Canadian sources stressed also that cooperation would have to be channelled through the German Embassy. They were apparently not receptive to the idea of German legal authorities operating in Canada.

But Canada would not stand in the way of interviews by German authorities with Canadians, including serving officers. It would be up to individual Canadians to decide whether they wished to be interviewed.

The Government is also willing to turn over the information it has in Defence Department files about the executions. The External Affairs spokesman said that quite a few details were given to the embassy a few months ago.

The two Germans executed were Rainer Beck, then twenty-eight, and Bruno Dorfer, then twenty. They were court-martialled for desertion.