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Death on the Rhine

by habu

Chapter 1

The Prey Is Sighted

The shadow by the stairway to the Helios deck of the MS River God drew back and sheathed the blade that had been held at the ready lest a moonbeam cast its damning light on dark intent.

Just moments to a death now.

The increased intensity of the groaning and moaning from the only occupied lounger on the rooftop deck of Rhine River luxury cruiser told of the impending death. The small figure was splayed on its back on the lounger, trembling legs spread wide, arms flailing, torso writhing, as the larger figure hunched over it, stabbing, stabbing, cutting deeper with each thrust, each thrust met with a tortured yelp and a moan.

A final cry in duet, the thrust of death, and the small figure collapsed in upon itself with the hiss of a long, spent sigh. The hunching figure rose up on its feet, looming over its prey, gave a satisfied and wicked laugh, and wiped its dripping blade clean before sheathing it.

The epitome of one man dominating another man. Fucking. The act and second of ejaculation. That had been what Michel Foucault's *The Use of Pleasure*, the book NYPD detective Clint Folsom had been reading while his partner—and lover—was dying equated to a type of death—orgasm as a point-of-death experience. And Folsom had become possessed with this concept and its association with Foucault's theory. He couldn't get the image out of his mind. The thought of that which followed the point of death possibly being one long, rolling orgasm initiated by a last-gasp ejaculation. Just as he couldn't get the vision of the hunched figure standing over his prey now in the

moonlight on the top deck the River God as it sliced the waters between Mainz and the vineyard village of Rudesheim out of his mind. Bruno Meister. The man who had sadofucked Folsom's partner and then killed him. And Folsom had traced the killer down on this Rhine River cruise and had followed him out on the open deck in the dark of night to take his revenge. But this obviously wasn't the opportunity he thought it would be.

Oh well, it was a six-day cruise to Amsterdam. There would be other opportunities.

* * * *

It was just the first day of the cruise, which had begun in Mainz. Folsom had run Meister to ground for the first since the master criminal had fled his crime in New York just an hour earlier at dinner in the Ambrosia Restaurant on the Apollo deck. The MS River God was a special ship, and this river cruise was even more special. It was a noholds-barred gay-oriented cruise that would unleash ninety well-heeled and very horny men into the welcoming arms of the forgiving city of Amsterdam in just less than a week. This, of course, would be no big deal for Amsterdam. It was a sexual paradise and supermarket.

When the NYPD traced Meister down to this cruise, they developed plans to meet the ship in Amsterdam. But Folsom thought his partner and lover, Brad Roberts, deserved better than a chancy attempt at extradition from the very-forgiving Netherlands. And Folsom was one of the few detectives in the department who would fit in unobtrusively on such a cruise. The NYPD had given him a leave of absence to fish

in Montana. But Folsom preferred to do his fishing here on the Rhine and to take care of business before the ship docked in Amsterdam.

Meister, a big bruiser of a German gangster who was on the far end of his fifties but who still held onto his commanding muscle and brooding good looks, was planted at the captain's table in the curve of the window at the bow of the boat. Folsom had found a seat for this first meal of the cruise on a nearby banquette, next to an Italian count who used his hands in conversation just as all Italians did and who wanted to have a conversation with Folsom's thighs and basket under the table. Wanting to fit in, Folsom was playing to the count's interest while he locked his attention on Meister, waiting for a chance to be alone with the monster he was pursuing.

Meister had many nefarious interests in New York, and Folsom and his partner, Roberts, had been zeroing in on an arrest, with Roberts serving as the inside man in Meister's operations. As far as Folsom knew, Meister had never laid eyes on he himself—which made this close pursuit possible. And serving as the inside man had meant that Roberts had negotiated his way into Meister's bed, which had been a stretch even for the inventive Roberts in view of Meister's nasty sexual preferences.

Roberts obviously had gotten just too close to Meister, if that was possible. When they found his body, he was naked and spread-eagled on his back on a luxury hotel room bed, his hands tied over his head to the headboard, his feet to the footboard, and a deep knife wound under his rib cage and traveling up into his heart. He'd been fucked, including with a monster-sized object that had torn him up pretty badly, and a thick sounding tube was still buried deep inside his cock. The autopsy determined the

presence of the latex of a condom in his ass canal. The case had been broken open primarily because the condom had also broken open. The DNA led to Meister.

Folsom was numb from the death of his partner and lover, but he was seething with rage. The image of the connection of ejaculation and death had possessed his mind. He sought one sort of revenge death for Meister, but ever since that night Brad had died, Folsom had also gone on a frenzied search for the ejaculation form of death for himself. It had only been as he neared the point of orgasm that he'd been able to forget what he had lost and what had happened to his lover. And it was the image of the possibility of the sensation of perpetual orgasm in the embrace of his beyond-the-pale lover, Brad Roberts, rolling down through eternity that propelled him to discount the cost of killing Meister himself.

He was hoping, as he eyed Meister exchanging jovial, expressive conversation with the captain and the other honored guests at the captain's table and flirting with the small, but solid Croatian waiter, Tiho, that the Italian count had a cock as sensuous and searching as his hands. Because after he had dispatched Meister, Folsom very much wanted to be dispatched himself—to spend whatever time it took to uncover his crime of vengeance in the arms and sheathing the possessing phallus of a vigorous lover. The Italian count seemed more than interested in helping him with that problem.

Tiho was playing Meister for all he was worth, prancing around the table as he served it, playing the coquet. And Meister was buying what Tiho had to sell. As the dessert course was served, Meister reached out while Tiho was placing a plate before him, wrapped a beefy hand around the young man's neck, and brought Tiho's ear down to his mouth. Tiho smiled at what was being whispered to him. Later, after coffee had

made the rounds and been consumed and when the captain had stood, shook hands all around with his guests, and left, Meister headed for the ship's foyer. Tiho was nowhere to be seen.

In the interim, the Italian count's hands had been having a conversation with Folsom's cock, which he had fished out of the detective's pants under the low-dipping cloth on the table, and Folsom was having a little trouble focusing on Meister's movement. This was his chance at getting Meister alone, however. The count would have to wait his turn at dispensing death.

Whispering a "Don't go away, I have to go to the WC," in the Italian's ear, Folsom disengaged the count's fingers, reholstered his piece, zipped up, and then rose and followed Meister down the corridor running between the suites from the dining room to the ship's foyer. He reached the top of the staircase leading half a deck down to foyer just in time to see Meister go off to the left and through the sliding glass doors onto the open porch beyond where the gangway would start when the boat was docked and from whence the stairs led up to the open Helios deck.

Not wanting the desk manager to see that he was following Meister, Folsom walked on past the reception desk and into the Alexander Lounge. Passengers, having finished their dinner, were already gathering in there. The room had a Mediterranean motif, and three beef-cake, heavily muscled, blond-haired men were taking orders and tending bar. They wore only short, Roman soldier-type skirts, laced sandals, and gold arm rings. Gold-colored sequined masks hid the upper part of their faces and made one indistinguishable to another. Muscle perfected in triplicate.

Folsom just stood at the entryway, though, watching the reception desk with his peripheral vision. And when the desk manager turned away, he turned and slipped out the sliding glass doors.

He immediately, though, had to sink into the shadows of the porch, out of sight of both the foyer and of the upper part of the stairs leading to the Helios deck, because he wasn't alone. A now-naked Tiho, except for his rhinestone-encrusted short waiter's vest, was sitting on a step near the top of the stairs, and Meister was standing on a stair below him, with his back to Folsom. They both had their hands on the side rails, and Tiho was mouthing Meister's cock, as the German gangster slowly stroked his buttocks back and forth, clearly enjoying the sucking he was receiving.

One of Meister's hands came off the rail and disappeared in front of him, and from the groaning and grunting that Tiho had started to do and the fidgeting of his torso in the moonlight, it was evident that the German was opening the young Croatian's hole up with his fingers in preparation for a plowing. At length Meister gave a command, and they both disengaged and moved up the stairs and onto the lounger on the Helios deck.

Folsom followed them on up to the top, silently sticking to the shadows. He drew out his knife, anxious for Meister to finish with Tiho and for Tiho to leave. But Tiho didn't leave. After that first plowing, Meister gripped Tiho by the sides of his head and guided the young man's mouth to his cock again. Meister obviously wanted a second helping, and who knew how long it would take for him to reload and then finish with Tiho a second time—and perhaps a third—time?

With a sigh of resignation, Folsom turned and silently worked his way down the stairs again. It was a six-day cruise. There would be other opportunities. But soon, Folsom told himself. Very soon.

Chapter 2

Another Form of Release and Death

Clint Folsom was angry, tense, and horny as well now, having missed his first opportunity to dispatch the killer of his lover. He had sought one form of death—Bruno Meister's death. Having been denied that, he now had a gripping need for another form of death. It was time to see if the Italian count was able to live up to his potential.

Folsom crossed the foyer and mounted the half-story of stairs to the corridor leading through the suite section and back to the Ambrosia Restaurant. But, as he approached the entrance into the corridor, he saw the Italian count at the door to one of the suites. And there beside him, being held with a firm grip on his butt by the count was one of the other passengers, a man in his thirties who Folsom had recognized from porn movies he had watched with Brad. The door opened, but they stood on the threshold, kissing deeply, and the count, having unbuttoned the porn star's shirt as they were kissing, moved his lips traveled down the neck of the young photogenic stud and through a thatch of curly hair toward a nipple, as the two disappeared into one of the suites, And with that disappeared that option for Folsom, unless he was up for a threesome. And of course he was—but he thought it might be presumptuous for him to join the party until and unless he was invited.

He turned and went back to the Alexander Lounge and bellied up to the bar. He ordered a scorpion from one of the three masked and minimally dressed bartender hunks, and the bartender laughed and flashed him a winsome smile when he did so. Folsom raised his eyebrow at that.

"Sorry, mate," the man said with a slight Australian brogue. "Just a private little joke. I'm sorry. But, say, you look a bit down. This isn't the sort of cruise for that."

"I was near death tonight," Folsom answered, as he received and swirled his drink. "But not nearly near enough."

The bartender said he didn't understand, and Folsom explained to him the equation he had recently read about of death through ejaculation.

"I can help you with that, mate," the bartender answered. "I right fancy you. You look like you keep in tip top shape."

"I'm in such a state, I'd need it rough and hard," Folsom said wistfully. Now that he thought about it, maybe the Italian count wouldn't have worked well tonight. He seemed much too refined. Folsom wanted to sweat and squeal, to feel it deep and hard.

"Than I'm your death deliverer," the bartender said with a broad smile. "I can get away at any time. Or if you want to wait until after one, I can do you right here on the bar."

"Cabin 335," Folsom said in a hoarse voice. "Twenty minutes. The door will be unlocked." Then he tossed off his drink and quickly rose and walked out of the lounge, in a hurry lest the hunk behind the bar changed his mind.

He entered his cabin and tossed off his clothes and showered quickly in the small, but efficient bathroom. The cabin itself was bathed in soft light from recessed lighting around the edges of the ceiling. On each of the side walls of the cabin, with their blue-velvet upholstered headboards against the outside wall, were two blue-plush benches, either of which could be covered with a pull-down single bed. The walls and built-in drawers and bed frames were of a burled, blondish wood. The floor was

carpeted in gold. The room attendant had pulled down just one of the beds and prepared it for the night. A sturdy table was set against the outer wall between the benches, and the entire width of the outer wall was a picture window, covered with gold pull curtains, now closed.

Folsom draped a silk robe over his shoulders but didn't bother to close it. He leaned over the table and opened the curtains. The ship was moving fast in the nighttime, its lights picking out a verge of grass and trees at the edge of the river in the near distance. Mist sprayed past the window, picked up as of more substance than it really was in the reflection of lights from the ship.

Folsom turned at a sound, and the bartender had entered the cabin and was just shutting and locking the door behind him. He pulled at his legionnaire-style skirt and underbriefs and they dropped to the ground. Folsom swallowed hard and his eyes went wide. The masked hunk was horse hung. He let the robe slip off his shoulders, and the bartender gave a yelp of approval and desire and was at Folsom, pushing him roughly down on his back on the table top and coming up on the table on his knees, holding Folsom's torso firmly between strong thighs. He took Folsom's head and brought it up to his mouth and brutalized his lips with his own and forcing his tongue into Folsom's mouth, making feral animal noises of lust and possession.

At length, he rose up on his knees, grabbed Folsom's wrists in his strong hands and forced them above his head and against the plate glass window. Then he force-fed his engorging cock into Folsom's mouth and face fucked him. Folsom gagged and fought for breath, loving every moment of the assault, seeking a rough release and death. As he fought hard to accommodate the huge tool, his eyes went to the

bartender's shaved groin, and he almost laughed. There, in the soft crevice just above and to the left of the root of the man's cock was a tattoo. It was of a scorpion. Thus the amused reaction from the bartender when Folsom had ordered a scorpion cocktail. Folsom reveled in the sting of a scorpion. He was going to be delivered by a scorpion. He was reveling in having ordered this volatile cocktail.

The hunk clamored off Folsom's chest and turned him onto his belly on the table. He could barely touch the floor with his toes as he opened his legs wide in response to the hunk's slapping of and pulling at his butt cheeks. The hunk was attacking Folsom's asshole with his mouth. He pulled Folsom's cock back through his legs and was alternating attention to his hole with attention to his cock and balls with tongue and fingers.

Folsom looked up into the night through the opaque window as he was being prepared for mounting and saw that the lights of buildings along the Rhine were becoming more frequent. They were approaching Rudesheim, where they would dock in a few hours and that had several wineries the passengers could explore on the morrow. His mind contrasted the peaceful scene beyond the window and the ravishing of his body here inside the cabin. He was panting and moaning under the assault of the tongue and probing fingers and was quickly moving to a death.

And just as he died and his seed spilled out onto the gold carpet below the table, he cried out in pain. At that very moment the masked hunk thrust his cock inside Folsom's ass, bumping his head up against the plate glass window and plastering his cheek against the pane, where his peripheral vision saw flashes of lights from the river bank against the spray of sea foam. Folsom grunted and writhed and begged for mercy

and for slower and less forceful thrusts inside him, not really wanting it to stop or slow down, and not receiving any mercy. The bartender had his hips in a strong grip and was drawing him back into each deep thrust of his powerful phallus.

Folsom rose off the table in a involuntary movement to escape the onslaught or at least to keep the thrusts from going ever deeper, but the hunk just turned him and pushed him down onto the adjacent bed onto his back, spread his legs wide, dug his own knees under Folsom's buttocks, and started pumping him hard again. Folsom found straps at the side and the head of the bed to hang onto in seas that were only rough in his cabin. He arched his back as the hunk ravished his nipples with his teeth while he stroked his channel hard and pumped his cock with a strong fist.

Folsom died a second time, spouting semen up onto the hunk's belly before the bartender himself gave a cry of joyous release.

The bartender left him almost immediately then and without a word. He used the cabin's shower, and then was gone, leaving Folsom to whimper in his exhaustion. Just part of his job on this sort of cruise. The death and release had been a good one for Folsom, though. It had taken his mind from his loss of Brad and from his scheming for revenge—if at least for the hour that he was being plowed. He was drifting off, only half possessed now with his demons, well plowed. But the lurching of the side of the boat against wood as the ship docked in Rudesheim jolted him back into the real world, and he only slowly sank into sleep, planning how he was going to get Meister alone. Maybe in the streets of Rudesheim, far away from the ship. He must do it undiscovered, if he could. He wanted to be around for a long, long time to savor his revenge.

Chapter 3

Double Death in the Vineyard

At the buffet breakfast the next morning in the Ambrosia Restaurant, Tiho was moving around a bit more gingerly and with a little less of the playful buoyancy and bounce that he had the night before, but he was still making an effort to play the role of everyone's favorite leprechaun. No doubt this was a studied role that won him extra tips at the end of the voyage; it certainly would make him a favorite of those seeking a young-looking, yet legally aged, partner to dominate on this cruise.

Bruno Meister wasn't in the restaurant, and Folsom had gone to great pains to determine that this was so. This wasn't really a surprise. The breakfast buffet was the one meal on the ship that was spread over several hours. And by the time Folsom had recovered from his own plowing the evening before and had come up for his meal, he could see that several of the other passengers had already eaten and had disembarked to explore the small wine village of Rudesheim. The MS River God had tied up very close to the town center.

The Italian count strutted in, master of the room, his blond porn star in tow, as

Folsom was drinking his last cup of coffee. They were seated before the count saw

Folsom, but he did see him as Folsom got up to leave and motioned the American

detective to join the blond and him at their table. Folsom didn't have time for this,

though; he was hell bent on finding Meister and dispatching him as soon as possible.

He didn't want to offend the Italian, however, so he went over to their table, told them

that he had something he had to do but maybe he'd see them later, and bent down and

gave the count a nice kiss on the lips—just to register that his retreat wasn't an matter of disinterest.

Then he went looking for Meister. He found him, decked out in gym shorts and a T, sitting at the bar in the Alexander Lounge, deep in conversation with one of the masked bartenders. Folsom couldn't tell if it was the same one who had so roughly and effectively fucked him the previous evening, but he was the only one of the three in the lounge at the time. Folsom walked on by, not wanting to show that he had any interest in what Meister was doing or to connect himself in any way to Meister. He stood at the window for a bit, feigning interest in what was going on out on the riverside market street beyond the boat dock. But all the time he was fingering the blade in his pocket, pumping himself up for the justice he was about to dispense.

When Folsom turned, he saw that the bartender was gone. And then Meister got off the stool as well and headed toward the foyer. Folsom waited until the German gangster was out of the lounge door and then quickly moved there himself to see where the German was headed. He took the stairs down to the B deck below and then turned right to descend to the C deck that ran part of the way under the Alexander Lounge. Folsom followed Meister at a discrete distance.

Having reached the C deck corridor of cabins, Meister moved to the very end of the corridor. The door at the end entered one of the crew areas, but Meister didn't go there; he turned and entered the last door on the right at the end of the corridor. Folsom knew this to be the ship's small exercise room, an exercise room for brochure purposes only, as there was only room for a couple of tread mills, a rack of weights, and a bench that could have been used for bench pressing if there had been room to move the

weights around in—which there wasn't. Folsom doubted that Meister could make any use of the room for exercise, but then he wasn't thinking clearly on the type of exercise Meister liked to do.

Folsom waited for a few minutes to enable Meister to get into an exercise routine and to be less likely to be prepared to react quickly. The detective reasoned he could be in and out in less than a minute, doing what he needed to do and being long gone before Meister's body was found.

As he drew nearer to the door into the exercise room, though, Folsom could hear low moaning. The door was slightly ajar and Folsom only needed to nudge it a bit to be able to see the weight bench. All Folsom could see initially, however, was the back of one of the bartenders, sans his Roman soldier-style skirt. Folsom's eyes went to the carpet next to the machine and he saw the rectangular wooden box and the surgical items inside. Sounding wands. The bartender then moved to the side enough that Folsom could see the naked body of Bruno Meister reclining on the bench, with his wrists tied off on the handle bars of the treadmill machines on either side of the bench. His eyes were closed, and his head was lolling back in his own world of ecstasy.

Meister was a large, barrel-chested man, but he was more a mass of compact muscle than fat. He was quite hairy all over and his cock was plump—very thick in erection, although not particularly long. Now it had the end of a tube protruding out of its piss slit, a tube that was being twirled gently and inserted slowly by the bartender.

Having heard a slight sound or sensing, perhaps, that they were being watched, the blond hunk turned toward the door. He didn't see Folsom, but Folsom couldn't quite see what he needed to see—he couldn't tell if there was a scorpion tattooed on the

man's groin close to the root of his cock. Unless all three of the bartenders were similarly tattooed, if the scorpion was there Folsom would know that this was the guy who had put it in him the previous night. If he was into this sort of kinky sex, Folsom might need to avoid a rematch with him.

Folsom pulled away from the door and quietly moved down the corridor. He didn't want to hurt anyone else; he only wanted to make Meister pay for his crime. He'd have to wait for another opportunity to do so.

Folsom retreated to the Alexander Lounge with a paperback novel and staked out an observation post for the return of the bartender and/or Meister. The other two bartenders were in service in the lounge when Folsom returned to it, but for the rest of the morning there was no sign of either Meister or the third bartender.

Folsom had barely begun to eat his lunch in the restaurant, only half full now, presumably because many of the passengers were exploring Rudesheim, when he saw Meister disembark and walk off into the town on a steep hillside cobblestoned street. The detective rushed to follow him, but when he reached the street running across the edge of the river, he couldn't even be sure which of three streets whose mouths came down to the river in close proximity was the one Meister had taken. Taking a stab at a choice, Folsom started up a street that the village map he'd taken from a stack on the reception desk told him led up to one of the wineries the ship's passengers had been told would be open for their inspection and tasting.

Near the top of the street, just opposite the entrance into the winery, Folsom caught sight of Meister sitting in an open street café. Another man was sitting with them, and they were having an extremely animated conversation; it almost looked like they

were arguing. Folsom retreated to the shadows near the entrance to the winery and observed the two men. With a creepy sense of confusion and surprise, Folsom came to realize that he knew the other man. It was a German senior police detective by the name of Sigmund Frist. Folsom had met him at an international police convention before Brad Roberts had become his partner and Folsom and Frist had even had a short fling in bed. Folsom remembered that Frist was very good in bed.

But what was he doing in Rudesheim, and more important, what was he doing talking with Meister. Could it be that Meister was going to be arrested before Folsom could get to him? This wouldn't be fair.

Meister flounced up from the table, as did Frist, and Meister started walking briskly down the street, with Frist closely following him and throwing angry words at his back. To escape notice, Folsom entered the winery, only to find himself face to face with the Italian count and his porn star tagalong.

"Oh, there you are, you lovely boy," the Italian count said with a big grin on his face. "We have just received permission to take some wine, cheese, and bread out into the vineyard. Would you care to join Lance and me for a lovely afternoon in the vineyard?"

Folsom saw no reason to refuse—certainly not as long as Frist was anywhere near Meister.

The count and the porn star gleefully danced out into the vineyard, the luxuriant vines heavy with grapes, and found a good vantage point to plop down where they could see the river and village below but could not easily be seen from those two

perspectives. By the time Folsom caught up with them, they essentially were naked and were devouring cheese and wine like there was no tomorrow.

The two pulled Folsom down onto the spread blanket between them and undressed him while plying him with wine. The three were drinking out of shared bottles, and it didn't take Folsom long to suspend his concern about Meister and surrender to their sensuous attention.

In a purely wanton act, the Italian poured wine down the front of Folsom's naked torso, and the blond porn star licked it off with his tongue. The count was kissing Folsom deeply on the lips when the porn star started giving attention to his cock and balls and asshole. Soon all three were writhing around on the ground, making three-way love. The Italian was lithe and willowy and his patrician nature shown through. He wasn't young, but he'd taken extremely good care of himself, and the attention he showed to Folsom proved that he was highly trained and skilled in the art of making love. His cock was long but slender. The porn star was perfectly muscled in keeping with his trade, but his cock, although of respectable length, was more slender than Folsom would have guessed would be ideal for movies.

It was while contemplating this and being maneuvered in a sandwiched position between the other two, who had gone into a yoga-style seated position with their legs folded over each other's and sitting closely together, that it hit Folsom that he remembered what the porn star's movie specialty was. He was known for those rare depictions of double penetration. That's why his slender cock wasn't considered a debit.

But by the time the American detective realized what he was being maneuvered into, the two had a half-drunk Folsom between them, facing the Italian, and the Italian

had a hand wrapped around his own cock docked with that of the porn star, and the porn star was pulling Folsom's hips down between them and spreading his butt cheeks with strong hands. Before it happened, Folsom realized that he was going to be double penetrated by those docked cocks, but he so sought the death of orgasm that double death seemed worth the try. thus, with much groaning and moaning and crying out of being filled to the limit, he just descended on the doubled poles and lost himself in the counterthrusting and four-handed body massaging of his exuberant companions.

It was a whole new and incredible sensation for Folsom, and his companions were also quickly lost in the feel of cock rubbing on cock and counterpistoning inside the undulating walls of an ass channel. they were all moaning and groaning and crying out in wine-enabled ecstasy, lost in the most intimate of threesomes, each straining to hold his ejaculation in check for as long as possible and reveling in a three-way fuck that they wanted to go on forever. The Italian and porn star came almost simultaneously inside Folsom, and then the porn star inclined his shoulders back to the ground and pulled Folsom's torso with him while the Italian slid his prick out of Folsom and expertly sucked him off, giving him the coup de grace in a trio of sighs and moans. It was a good death for Folsom and a pleasant afternoon in a sea of frustration and anger.

Chapter 4

Solace Found in a Willing Waiter

"Well, look who we have here."

Clint Folsom knew without even looking up that Inspector Sigmund Frist had recognized him.

"Hello, Sig," he answered, gesturing for his old acquaintance to take a seat in one of the velvet-upholstered barrel chairs in the Alexander Lounge. It was after dinner on the MS River God. The ship was still tied to the dock at Rudesheim, preparing for the run through the most scenic, castle-crowned section of the Rhine late the next morning and into the afternoon.

Folsom had returned from the afternoon romp in the vineyard a little bowlegged but still horny. He had been ridden doubly and well, but he was in the mood to fuck something himself now. The cute little waiter, Tiho, was the first to cross Folsom's path when he returned to the ship, and he didn't seem to mind in the least when Folsom drew him into his cabin and began to kiss him passionately.

Tiho himself made the first serious move when he opened his shirt and bared his breast and offered Folsom two pert little nipples with silver rings through them. Folsom ravaged them with his lips and teeth as he hunched over the waiter who had been backed up to the table between the benches. Tiho was making little yipping sounds and murmuring in some sort of East European language. Folsom certainly hoped the young man was voicing his pleasure, but he didn't much care. He wanted to get sucked and then to fuck something.

Folsom stripped Tiho's pants off and then his own, sat the waiter up on the table, reversed him, and forced him down on his back, his head at the end of the table facing Folsom. Then he braced his thighs against the table edge, took Tiho's head between his hands, and fucked down into the waiter's mouth until his cock was throbbing, full, and dripping.

Folsom then turned, unclipped one of the raised beds at the side and brought it down over the bench. He gathered Tiho up in his arms and turned him and put him down on the bed, sideways on his butt, spreading his legs wide. Tiho watched him in awe as Folsom struggled to roll a condom on his horse-hung cock and then pushed his legs out as wide as he could and arched his back as Folsom thrust inside his puckered hole.

Tiho screamed in surprise at the invasion, but his hole was slack and well used and he immediately mustered his English capability to let Folsom know that his efforts were appreciated. Folsom rode Tiho hard and long, trying to dispel all of the frustrations of his loss of his lover and his pursuit of Meister across Europe. And Tiho rode with him, expertly meeting his thrusts with counterthrusts of his own, well versed in the type of servicing required of the crew on such a voyage as this.

Spent and exhausted after a prodigious release of semen in an orgasmic death, Folsom turned Tiho in the bed when he had finished him and stretched out beside him. The American hugged the East European morsel to his breast, as the well-fucked and even-tempered lad hummed lullabies to the troubled passenger. When Folsom's eyes closed and his breathing became regular, Tiho unentangled himself and tiptoed out of

the cabin. He had enjoyed this fuck. It wasn't like what that bull of a German did to him. That one made him want to kill.

Folsom had slept in his cabin until dinner, moving then straight to the lounge for drinks. He would have offered to buy the German policeman a drink, but Frist was already hefting an industrial-sized scotch and water. "I haven't seen you before on the ship," Folsom said, trying to sound as casual as possible.

Folsom warily neglected to say that he'd already seen Frist earlier off the ship up the hill in Rudesheim, having an argument with Bruno Meister. He was very afraid that Frist was going to be taking Meister out of circulation for some other crime before Folsom himself could bring Meister to justice for the murder of his partner.

"No, I just joined the cruise here in Rudesheim," Frist answered. "There are too many inquisitive eyes in Mainz. It would have been unseemly for me to join the cruise there. This cruise has quite a reputation."

"So, you aren't here on business?" Folsom queried.

"No, pleasure," Frist responded. "And you? Are you here to track some dastardly criminal to ground? Or are you here to get fucked?"

The questions lay there in bold outline. Not even Folsom's own police department in New York knew he was here to track Bruno Meister down and kill him. How likely would it be that his intent would be negated if he told a senior German police official what he was doing here? And, indeed, could Frist already know and just wanted confirmation before he stepped in to prevent Folsom from taking his revenge?

"Pleasure, just like you," Folsom said after a pause, trying to muster up a broad smile for Frist. His smile wasn't as broad as Frist's was, though.

"And could perhaps your pleasure be my pleasure too?" Frist asked.

"Perhaps," Folsom responded. He answered thusly only partially to put Frist off the track of why he really was here. He also well remembered what a skillful lover the German policeman had been.

Frist sat there for a few minutes, swirling his scotch in front of his face, drinking in Folsom over the rim of the glass. "You look better than ever, Clint," he said at length. "You have yet to reach your prime, I think. Have you been well fucked since we last were together? Someone special in your life? Someone here on the cruise with you?"

"Not here on the cruise. But, yes, yes, there was someone in my life. But now that's over." Frist was either being very coy, or he really hadn't either heard about the murder of Brad Roberts or was unaware of any connection between both Folsom and Bruno Meister. There was no question that he knew Meister however. Their argument at the café in the town that afternoon had made that clear.

"And it ended sadly?" Frist asked in a low voice.

"I think you could safely say that," Folsom said and took a deep pull on his drink.

"I would very much like to fuck you again," Frist pressed in a low, hoarse voice.

"Would that be possible—for old time's sake? I think I was able to give you pleasure."

"Yes, yes, you did. Perhaps. That's what this cruise is all about." Folsom decided he needed to fully maintain the cover of having taken this cruise for the hookups.

"Have you been in the club downstairs? In Hephaestion?" Frist asked.

"Club? There's a club downstairs?"

"Yes. The stairs are just over there beyond the bar. I think it might put you in the proper mood. It's the very heart of this cruise. Come down there with me now—and then later we can go to my cabin."

Frist tossed off his scotch, stood, and held out his hand to Folsom, who also stood and meekly followed his German counterpart down into the club named for Alexander the Great's male lover. On the way to the stairs, they passed the bar, and the masked blond bartender on duty there gave Folsom a smile that seemed to claim intimacy. Folsom wondered if this was his lover of the previous night, and he smiled back in encouragement. He would like to have more of what that guy had given him.

Frist drew close to Folsom as they descended the stairs. Half way down he stopped and pulled the younger detective to him and kissed him deeply as he inserted one hand inside his shirt and tweaked a nipple and cupped his butt with the other one. Folsom's cock gave a lurch in memory of how Frist had seduced him at that police convention earlier and had, first, made gentle love to him and then had ridden him hard and long in a second wild fuck. Folsom knew that this would be one night of many orgasmic deaths in which he could become lost to the pain of this world.

If only he knew how orgasmic his night would be.

Chapter 5

The Inspector Comes

The blue and gold of the Alexander lounge turned into scarlet and gold of the Hephaestion club as the American detective, Clint Folsom, and the German police inspector, Sigmund Frist, descended into an area that took perhaps a third of the room of the lounge above it but that held quite a few banquette-style seating areas on three tiers going down to a small, round center stage. The decor here was as reminiscent of the Greco-Roman era of the Mediterranean as was the Alexander lounge. On the top tier to the right of where the staircase descended ran a red-padded bar in a semicircle around the room, and Frist perched on a bar stool here and spread his legs and brought Folsom's butt into his crouch.

As far as Folsom could determine, this space was tucked into the bow area under the lounge and he could make out a doorway under the stairs they had descended that probably went back toward the corridor that ended at the turn into the exercise room.

Frist had wrapped an arm possessively around Folsom's belly and had his chin on the younger detective's shoulder. Folsom could already feel Frist's groin come alive and he sighed at the thought of what was to come. He had remembered Frist has being a superb cocksman, with power hammer drive.

"Want something to drink?" Frist murmured in his ear. "Just tell the bartender; he's come over for our order."

At the same time Folsom was ordering a Scorpion, he turned toward the bar and did a double take. Yet another one of masked blond hunks was there to take his order

and was giving him the same "I know you; I've had you" smile. This set Folsom into some confusion; there could only be one of these studs who knew him so fully that he could share such a smile with him—and yet they had just left another such one up in the Alexander lounge. Folsom decided that they all probably were just very well schooled and that fucking the passengers or not fucking them was all the same thing and came with the territory; they were just taught to treat them all intimately, as required, and let the generous tips drop where they may.

Folsom and Frist were not alone at the bar. Seated next to them on a barstool, showing close interest in them from the moment they entered the room was a massive jet-black man, who Folsom had already been told was some vacationing potentate of a central African nation, traveling secretly outside of his region, spending his country's treasury and indulging in his taste for other men who didn't succumb to his charms simply to keep their heads on their shoulders.

As Folsom took his Scorpion from the bartender, whose hand lingered on his in the exchange a tad more than necessary, the lights on the walls around the chamber started to dim and spots opened up on the stage area below. A large number of the ship's passengers were in attendance, and many of them were already well into pleasing each other intimately. In keeping with the spirit of this, Frist's free hand had already unzipped Folsom and was cupping his package directly, skin on skin. No one around them seemed to mind or to pay them much attention; they all were paired off and doing much the same themselves.

The ebony giant moved his barstool a little closer to Folsom and Frist, and his eyes were glued to Folsom's crotch, even though nearly everyone else was checking out the lit stage area.

As Frist nibbled and kissed the hollow of his neck, Folsom tried to focus on what was happening on the small stage below. An opaque, Plexiglas crossbeamed X rose out of the center of the stage. The stage was empty, but not for long. To the sound of a slow drum beat, the door under the stairs opened and two figures emerged and slowly made their way down to the stage. The one who seemed to be in command was a somewhat older rendition of the masked blond bartender trio. He was a good twenty years older than the bartenders—perhaps in his mid forties—and was rangier than they were, but he still had good, ropy muscle tone, his muscles so hard that the veins stood out on his arms, torso, and legs for lack of interior room to run. Like the bartenders, he was dressed only in a short Roman-soldier skirt, which in his case was gold lamé in contrast to their shiny white; gold sandals, with gold laces rising to his knees, gold bracelets snaking around his upper arms, and a gold-sequined mask. He was carrying a gold box under his arm and was swishing a gold multistranded whip in his other hand. The other figure was that of a short, lithe young man of olive complexion and of a sloeeyed, dark, curly haired beauty that was almost feminine in its delicacy. He was dressed in a loose shocking-white tunic and was wearing sandals similar to his companion's, except in simple brown leather. And he had a gold collar around his neck that sparkled under the spotlights. The tunic hid his torso, but his lightly muscled arms and legs indicated a well-formed, if willowy frame.

The drums stopped their beat as the two reached the stage, and a disembodied voice asked those assembled to give a welcome to Roman the Magnificent and his assistant, Dieter. There was a smattering of applause that didn't really mean any disrespect; it meant more that many hands among the audience were so buried in their own devices that they couldn't readily disengage and welcome the evening's entertainment appropriately.

Frist and Folsom did clap, though, and Frist took advantage of having his hands now free to pull Folsom's head around and give him a deep kiss. He then pushed Folsom's pants down on his thighs, unzipped and freed himself, and brought Folsom's butt back into his crotch, with Folsom's balls and cock lying on top of Frist's sturdy piece as it thrust its way between Folsom's thighs. Frist held his hand there, letting the two pricks become better acquainted. Folsom took a big swig of his drink and tried to keep his rising desire in check as Frist slightly rolled his hips, rubbing the root of his tool back and forth on Folsom's exposed channel entrance.

Another hand had come into play now. The African leader, his heaving chest about to burst through the white linen tunic-style shirt he wore over equally white linen pants, was running a beefy hand up and down on Folsom's inner thighs, coming ever closer to the docked cocks.

The drink was strong and put Folsom a little out of kilter. But he took another big drag on it and then tried to focus his attention to the center of the state. What he really wanted to do was push Frist to the floor and sit on his cock and ride him until all thoughts of Brad Roberts and how he died and who had killed him were fucked out of

his mind. But then Frist might become suspicious and start unraveling Folsom's true intent for coming on this cruise.

Down on the stage, the older man, obviously Roman the Magnificent, was tying the diminutive Dieter in spread-eagled fashion to the Plexiglas crossbar, his back against the crossbar, so that his arms and legs were spread and he was firmly fastened to the crossbar at his wrists and ankles. Then Roman opened the gold box he had brought onstage with him and took out a nasty-looking pearl-handled hunting knife and, as the drums took up a gentle beating again, this time accompanied by the sound of flutes, he began shredding Dieter's tunic. During this process, which had caught the audience's attention and fancy, the young man swayed about and made a mock attempt to pull away from his bonds.

Roman stepped up to the young man, wrapped his fists in the shredded material covering his chest and ripped it away, revealing a slender, but well-muscled and perfectly proportioned torso. He then went behind the youth and ripped away the material behind as the whole center stage began to revolve. As the crossbar turned, Folsom and Frist could now see Dieter's slender, deeply dimpled hips and firm, rounded butt cheeks.

Roman the Magnificent stood back and started swishing the young man's torso with the multistranded whip, not doing any damage, really. But Dieter writhed around as if it were otherwise, and lips of lust and anticipation were being licked all around the banquettes.

Frist had two of his fingers in Folsom's mouth now, and the younger detective was giving them suck, his eyes slitted with wanton pleasure at this and what was

happening between his legs as he watched the playacted debauchery begin on stage.

The ebony potentate was drawing ever closer to Folsom and Frist and he now was fisting and stroking Folsom's piece.

Roman went to his box of tricks again and came out with a handful of small golden clamps, which, to the tune of much groaning and moaning and feigned begging from Dieter and an increase in the rhythm and volume of the drums and flutes, he began clamping onto the youth's body, concentrating first on the nipples and then in a V from there up to Dieter's shoulders and then on his inner thighs, rising toward the groin.

As Dieter writhed on stage under this onslaught, Frist withdrew his salivamoistened fingers from Folsom's mouth and moved his hand down between his thigh and that of Folsom. Folsom began to writhe just as Dieter was doing as Frist's fingers rimmed his ass and then entered him. The African was stroking Folsom hard now and had his head nearly in Folsom's lap. His other hand had gone under the stool, and now fat African fingers had joined slender German ones inside Folsom's ass.

"Uhh. Oh God," Folsom exclaimed to Frist with a release of breath. "What are you two doing? You said we'd go back to your room. It was to be just the two of us."

"Haven't you remembered, Clint?" Frist whispered into his ear. "Remember? I can do you here and there and in the corridor in between too, and alone or with others. You liked that before. The danger of that. And then I can turn you to the African, and he can use my cream as a lube." Both Frist and the African were breathing hard now and working their fingers together.

"Oh God, Oh shit!"

"And do you like this?" Frist asked in a husky voice.

"Oh, oh, y-e-s."

"And this?"

"Oh shit. Oh fuck y-e-S-S!"

The African had his lips on Folsom's cock now, but this was just too much, too fast for Folsom.

"Please not this, not here, not now," Folsom exclaimed. He pushed the African's head away. The African sat up, looking very disappointed.

"Later," Folsom managed to say through gasps of what he and Frist were doing with their fingers. "Later would be fine," he said to the African. "When I can concentrate just on you."

This seemed to placate the ebony giant, who could naturally see that there was no reason for him to be sharing such a luscious tidbit with anyone else, and he sat back on his barstool and turned his attention for the first time to the entertainment on the stage.

Roman had been flicking the clamps on Dieter with his golden whip, and Dieter was tossing his body back and forth on his restraints and moaning loudly. Roman went back to his golden box and extracted a mammoth-sized dildo. Dieter looked at it and his eyes went wide in well-schooled fear and trepidation. As Roman played the dildo up and down between Dieter's butt cheeks, Frist rubbed his cock against Folsom's hole, holding his hips to him with a strong hand on Folsom's belly.

Roman poised the dildo at Dieter's asshole for a full revolution for all in the audience to see, as Frist took a silver packet from his pocket, tore it open, and rolled a condom on his erect cock.

Roman slowly pushed the dildo into Dieter's hole as Frist lifted Folsom hips and pulled him back on his skewering cock. Dieter cried out and arched his back. Folsom gave a little cry, arched his back up to where his shoulders dug into Frist's chest, and threw his arms up and around Frist's neck. The two moved into a deep kiss as Frist's tool worked its way ever deeper into Folsom's channel.

They were lost in lust—for only for a second. They both heard the cry from the stage and focused their attention there. Roman and Dieter no longer were alone on the stage. A naked hairy figure as outsized as a bull—not fat exactly but stocky and with a thick ram between his legs—had jumped up on stage. He was quickly followed by another figure, who Folsom quickly identified as one of the masked blond bartenders, now without his skirt on. The bull, who Folsom realized with much shock was Bruno Meister, grabbed the whip from Roman and was lashing Dieter hard with it. The young man was writhing and crying out for real now, it appeared.

Both Roman and the bartender, who evidently had been with Meister before he had become crazed and stormed the stage in a lust called forth by what was being acted out there, stood aside and let Meister have his way, although both had expressed of deep hatred on their faces. As the bartender turned, Folsom zeroed in on the groin. There was, indeed, a tattoo there just above a lovely sized prick. Folsom couldn't tell at this distance whether or not it was a scorpion, but he thought it highly likely that this was his special bartender.

With much vocalization of his burning lust, Meister stripped Dieter's bonds, picked up the dildo from the ground and herded the young man off the stage and

through the door below the stairs. When they were gone, Roman and the masked bartender exchanged dark looks and followed on behind.

"It looks like the show is over," Frist said as he pulled out of a now distracted Folsom.

"Who the fuck does he think he is?" Folsom asked in indignation, trying his best not to reveal that he'd ever even seen Meister before.

"That's easy," Frist said with a bitter laugh. "He's the big cheese here. That's Bruno Meister; he owns this tub and everyone working on it. He can do what he wants with them."

The magic between Frist and Folsom was lost now, if only temporarily. "Perhaps we should use this opportunity to adjourn to my cabin," Frist said with a touch of regret in his voice.

The two adjusted their clothing and Frist lifted Folsom's unfinished drink from the bar and watched him chug it before they left.

Frist supported Folsom as they mounted the stairs, walked through the Alexander lounge and foyer, and descended the stairs to the B corridor cabins. Folsom was feeling a little woozy now, an apparent combination of the invigorating and draining day he had already had the effects of the strong drink. Frist's cabin was on the same corridor as Folsom's but on the other side of the ship.

As had been the case in Folsom's cabin the previous evening, the steward had lowered only one of the beds and, after helping Folsom shed his clothes, Frist sat him on the edge of this bed, disrobed himself, and then knelt between Folsom's thighs and gently sucked Folsom to a orgasmic death.

Folsom was having trouble focusing. The cabin walls seemed to be moving, although he knew the ship was still docked at Rudesheim.

After Folsom had ejaculated, Frist rose and sat beside him and made slow and gentle love to him with his hands and lips and tongue, while Folsom sighed and moaned and tried to focus on Frist's expert lovemaking.

At length, Folsom fell over onto the bed sideways, and Frist stretched him out on his belly on the bed, his legs together. Folsom was aware of Frist stretching out on top of him—but just barely. However, he was very much aware when Frist, straddling his exposed butt cheeks with his thighs. Folsom jolted awake and nearly lifted off the bed at Frist's first thrust inside him, but he got the old lover's measure as he entered his channel strongly and deeply and began stroke his hips up and back on Folsom's thighs, in a wavelike fashion, his thighs encasing Folsom's and his chest propped up from Folsom's shoulders with arms locked and hands buried in the mattress. As Frist's cock dug deeper and stroked harder, Folsom gathered up a wad of sheeting in his mouth to keep himself from screaming in tones that could be heard beyond the cabin's walls and grabbed for those storm straps at the head of the bed.

Folsom was still conscious when Frist came in a first ejaculation of ecstasy, and he was barely conscious while Frist nibbled at his ear and rolled on a fresh condom, and then renewed his stroking down into him. But then Folsom slept. The sleep of the dead. The welcome release from the cares of this world, while Frist continued thrusting, thrusting, thrusting.

Chapter 6

Rhine on the Rocks

Folsom was set adrift on the Rhine, but it was a gelatinous Rhine, which supported his body as he lay on his back and which swayed him back and forth with the current. But the current wasn't being provided by the flow of the father of all German rivers; the motion was being provided by a multitude of men between his legs, moving him back and forth on their hard cocks. He was being taken to multiple deaths by ejaculation by a procession of men, some nearly identifiable to his lost lover, Brad Roberts, and to a long line of other men who had known him. He sighed and moaned for them with sounds that seemed to be echoing back at him in loud mutterings that blended with the sounds of the water rushing past him. He momentarily tried to reason how the water could be gelatinous and rushing at the same time, but he felt weak and groggy and just laid back and enjoyed the fucking.

The grinning face of a man in a mask rose up between his legs and he was being entered again. And this time he was being invaded with a member that was impossibly thick. He grunted and groaned as it just kept feeding into him at a depth he'd never experienced before. He tried to raise his head to seek assurances that his masked assaulter was bottoming out, but the figure rolled his torso up onto Folsom's belly so that his view was blocked. However, after Folsom had taken several more inches inside him, the masked figure took Folsom's hands and brought them between his legs and wrapped them around a smooth plastic grip. He placed his own hands over Folsom's and guided him in stroking himself with the oversized dildo that was mining his ass passage.

The sound of the rushing water grew louder, overpowering Folsom's groans and moans so that he couldn't even hear himself. He felt like he was in a drunken stupor, but he felt himself bucking hard against the mammoth dildo churning around inside him. It slowly retreated and he turned his head to the side, pulled a string of the gelatinous material into his mouth, and bit down on it to keep himself from screaming out. Even this confused him, as he was both terrified of what was happening to him and in a deep state of ecstasy at what was turning and stroking inside him.

The clouds of confusion began to dissipate around him, and he no longer was floating in the river. He was in one of the cabins on the MS River God—not his own cabin, but one quite similar to it. He was stretched out on the bed, his face only a few inches from the edge of the table. One thing remained the same, however: something was stroking back and forth deep inside his ass channel.

As he became more conscious, Folsom realized he was in the embrace of another man, who was stretched behind him, both of them on their sides. The other man was holding him firmly encased in his arms, with a hand on Folsom's belly that pushed in so that Folsom's hips met the thrust of the man's cock. The man was murmuring in Folsom's ear in words that were becoming increasingly clear.

"You're so nice. Such a sweet, warm ass."

Folsom recognized the voice and turned his head to receive a deep kiss on the lips from Sigmund Frist, whose body suddenly became quite taut. Frist gave a little cry, thrust his hips against Folsom's butt three times in short, insistent strokes of spurting release, and then fully relaxed against Folsom with a satisfied sigh.

"That was so nice. As good as all the rest," he whispered. "You're amazing."

"All the rest?" Folsom asked in a hoarse voice, a voice he had been searching to exercise for some time but only now seemed to be able to command.

"Yes. We've been fucking all night. Look it's day already. And look at those." He laughed as he pointed to a pile of spent condoms on the floor beside the bed and under the table. "This is why I come on these cruises. For the release, pent up from months of hard work." Folsom saw that, indeed, they had been very busy. He remembered little of it, having slept so deeply after the exhausting previous day. But he didn't even consider telling Frist that he'd been more than half out of consciousness most of the night. He also had a splitting headache and his mouth felt like it was full of cotton.

Folsom looked up at the window wall running around the head of the bed and the inner edge of the table and saw that Frist had spoken the truth. Daylight was streaming through the window. He could also feel that the ship was under way, plowing down the Rhine toward Koblenz. They had left Rudesheim behind.

Disengaging himself from Frist, Folsom asked if he could shower and then declined the offer that they shower together. If they'd done it as many times as Frist indicated they had, he thought they both had had enough. All he could think of was getting rid of this headache and going back to tracking Bruno Meister down and killing him.

After he emerged from the shower and as he was drying himself off, Frist, still stretched out, naked in the bed, was looking very pleased with himself and looked very pleasing to Folsom still.

"We're under way," Folsom said, noting the obvious just to fill the air with something more than the smell of sweat and sex.

"Yes. This is our Romantic Rhine day," Frist answered. "The entire day until late this afternoon flowing down the most scenic stretch of the Rhine—lots of castle ruins perched on high hills with vineyards running down to medieval villages at the river's edge. It's a day just for sitting and gawking at the landscape, although I would be content to just sit and gawk at you."

Folsom managed to retreat from Frist's cabin without so much as another kiss or embrace—he knew that if he let Frist touch him again, it was likely they'd be in bed for the rest of the morning.

His cabin was being attended to by the steward when he reached it, and after an awkward greeting without explanation on why the room had obviously been unused since it was set up for night the previous evening, Folsom went on to the restaurant for a buffet breakfast.

He ate quickly, not bothering even to check on whether Meister was about and then returned to his cabin, stripped, and pulled on a Speedo. He'd go topside and try to shake this headache and take in the sights as well.

About half of the passengers had chosen to oo and ah over the Romantic Rhine cruise, complete with commentary from the bridge, from the comfort of the Alexander lounge. But many others, like Folsom, chose to watch the scenery slide by while getting a tan, and were topside, on the Helios deck. A few of these men were paying some attention to the landscape; several more were more interested in the sights of other men stripped down for tanning; and a large group was already fucking on the lounge chairs and completely oblivious of the centerpiece of their sightseeing cruise.

Folsom didn't make it very far down the line of loungers before a black, beefy hand reached out, took his wrist, and brought him to a seated position on a lounger. It was the African potentate, wearing only a thong, and looking like a massive black statue, more well-defined gleaming muscle on a man than Folsom had ever seen before.

"Remember me?" the African said, showing a full set of pearly whites that contrasted with the blackness of his handsome face.

"Of course," Folsom responded. "How could I forget?"

Another big grin from the African.

"You said maybe later."

"Yes, yes I did."

"Can this be maybe later?" the African asked, although his hands were well ahead of his mouth. He already had a beefy paw between Folsom's prick and the inner lining of the Speedo.

"Yes, why not?" Folsom said and then the need for discussion had ended. In short order Folsom was stretched out, reversed, on top of the African, Folsom's mouth working the African's gigantic tool and the African's thick tongue working Folsom's asshole.

When he was ready, the ebony giant lifted Folsom's body by his waist as if it was a paper doll, and with much huffing and puffing from them both, brought Folsom's ass down into his lap, slowly skewering Folsom's channel on his massive pole. Then he pulled Folsom's shoulder blades back onto his chest, moved his legs to the side of the lounger, dug his heels into the deck of the ship and began a long, rhythmic stroking up

into Folsom to the tune of much gasping, panting, and impassioned cries—from both of them.

When they both were spent, they just lay there, Folsom stretched on top of the African, and watched the ship's passage through rocks of the Loreley, with their legend of siren songs luring seafarers to their death on the tricky shoals of the passage of the Rhine between two rocky crags.

As they passed this formation, a shadow fell on Folsom and he looked up to see Frist staring down at them. He didn't look the least bit pleased. In fact, he looked rather upset.

"Look, Sig, just because we . . . ," Folsom started to say, but Frist motioned him to stop with a cutting gesture of his hand.

"I don't give a crap who you fuck or how often you fuck them, Folsom. I just came to get you because there's something you need to see . . . in your professional capacity. Could you come with me below, please?" It didn't really sound to Folsom like either a request or a question. Frist obviously was quite upset about something.

Folsom had the sinking feeling of having been dashed on the rocks by the siren song of the Loreley, but he had no idea why he felt this way.

Chapter 7

A Stolen Death

The German police detective, Sigmund Frist, who had been plowing his

American counterpart, Clint Folsom, the previous night couldn't have picked a worse
time to want further attention from Folsom. Folsom had gone to sun bathe and to dry out
the effects of a raucous night topside on the MS River God as it shot down the most
scenic segment of the Rhine. But he'd been waylaid this morning on the Helios deck by
a heavenly endowed African potentate who had him stretched out on a lounger and was
mining his ass with his very royal manhood.

Folsom's first thought when Frist interrupted this little orgiastic death out of Africa scene was that Frist was jealous and territorial. But then he discerned that there was something much more serious behind the German's gruffness and insistence that Folsom go below with him.

With apologies to the good-natured African, who was easily placated with the promise of a rematch, Folsom rose and pulled on his Speedo and slipped a T-shirt over his head. Seconds later, he was padding along behind Frist down to the Apollo deck, where the major suites were sandwiched between the Ambrosia restaurant and the reception fover and the Alexander lounge.

Frist responded to none of Folsom's questions as they descended from the sun deck. He just went to the door of the Zeus suite, looked around to ensure that they were not being spied on, indicated that Folsom should open the door and pushed him inside, and then shouldered the door closed behind them.

Folsom gasped, hardly believing what he saw. He had seen this tableau before—and it was one that he'd never forget and that marked the turning point in his life. He was forced to look away in horror. He turned to Frist, who was looking very serious and was pulling surgical gloves on his hands. He didn't, however, offer Folsom a pair.

Bruno was stretched out, on his back and naked, on a king-sized bed. He was spread-eagled with his appendages bound to posts at the four corners of the bed. He was quite dead, and the grotesque grimace set on his face indicated that he hadn't died easily. A thick sounding wand was buried deep in the piss slit of his cock and he had bled from both his ass channel and from a knife wound below his rib cage on right side of his torso.

This scene was all too familiar to Folsom. This was exactly the scene of his lover and partner's death, a death that Folsom had been tracking Bruno Meister down for having committed. This was such a fitting death for Meister, but a gorge of rage rose from Folsom's belly that Meister had escaped him—that someone else had gotten there first.

"Who. What . . . ?" Folsom stammered out.

"The knife wound was enough to kill him," Frist said. "But the anal bleeding indicates he was probably fucked by an oversized object as well. Probably just a kinky sex party gone bad, but this is quite an inconvenient mess."

"Yes, probably just a party gone bad," Folsom repeated in a shocked monotone. But his mind was crying out that no, the similarities between this scene and that of Brad Robert's death were just too coincidental. No, something else was afoot here. He was sure of it. But who else on this ship other than he himself could make this connection.

He had to think. And he had to hide these thoughts from Frist. Frist, first of all, was a policemen. And this was his territory.

"I don't understand. Why are you showing this to me? Are you taking on this investigation? Who else knows of this."

"That isn't all," Frist responded, clearly indicating that show and tell wasn't over and the answering of questions hadn't begun. He motioned for Folsom to open the door and follow him back down the corridor. They went down the stairs at the foyer to the deck below and walked into the short corridor of passenger cabins under the midship portion of the Alexander lounge. Folsom heard the sound of sobbing, which increased as they walked toward the end of the corridor, toward where the door to the exercise room was on the right and the door into a crew area and eventually, Folsom assumed, led to the door under the stairs in the Hephaestion club room. Frist turned to the right into the small exercise room, which seemed overflowing with men and equipment.

The first man encountered was the ship's captain, who was standing stiffly just inside the doorway with a deep-creased frown on his face. Looking past him, Folsom saw the source of the weeping. Roman the Magnificent, the tormentor of the previous evening in Hephaestion, was hunched over the weight bench and wailing to beat the band. He seemed to be playing the tormented rather than the tormentor today.

And then Folsom saw the reason for Roman's lamenting. He was shielding and hugging the naked body of his erstwhile assistant, Dieter, which was propped on the bench, wrists tied to the handlebars of the treadmills on either side of the bench and ankles to the feet of the opposite ends of the treadmills. There was a sounding wand buried in his piss slit, and a knife wound under his rib cage, and, if he could have seen

past Roman's protecting body, Folsom was sure that there would be bleeding from his rectum too. There was entirely too much of this going around.

Folsom stood, dazed, watching the touching farewell love scene between Roman and Dieter, a near twin of the one he himself had had with Brad Roberts when he had come upon that murder scene. No, there was no coincidences in these two deaths on the Rhine, Folsom told himself. And he was sure there was a link to Roberts's death as well.

While Roman was grieving and the wheels were spinning in Folsom's mind, Frist and the captain were speaking in low tones at the door. But when Folsom turned toward the door, Frist was gone and the captain was taking command.

"The German authorities will, of course, come on board as soon as we reach Koblenz late this afternoon," the captain said. "I'll send someone down to tend to Roman and to seal this door. But in the meantime, Mr. Folsom, I would appreciate it if you went to your cabin and stayed there and didn't speak of this to anyone."

"Yes, yes, of course, Captain," Folsom responded and turned immediately and walked back up the corridor. He had been in such a daze upon the discovery in succession of two identical deaths that, as he walked slowly back to his cabin, he couldn't remember whether any mention of Bruno Meister's death had been made to the captain at all.

Folsom was surprised to find Frist waiting for him in his cabin. He tried to discuss what had happened with Frist, but his mind was working too slowly in gauging what to say that didn't bring in the connections to Robert's death or reveal that Folsom himself had planned to kill Meister. Before he could form what to say or ask, Frist was shushing

him and had pulled off his T and had his torso arched back as Frist attacked his nipples with his lips and teeth. Folsom was pushed down on the bed that had been lowered before he entered the room, and Frist slid his Speedo off his hips and down his legs. He spread the younger American's legs wide, thrust inside him, and fucked away all of Folsom's questions. Exhausted once more by overwhelming sex, Folsom was nodding off as Frist left him and exited the cabin. It was only right before sleep claimed him that Folsom remembered the most pressing question that he had. How had Frist gotten into his locked cabin?

The captain had Folsom's dinner delivered to his cabin that evening. A trembling and obviously troubled Tiho brought the tray in. He was on the verge of saying something to Folsom, but then he clamped his jaw shut and scurried out of the room, the very personification of a scared rabbit.

About an hour after the boat arrived in Koblenz, Folsom got the call that a German inspector wanted to talk with him in the library. Folsom had watched the boat round the bend at the gigantic bronze statue of Kaiser Wilhelm the First, and move up into the Moselle River. Then he had seen from his cabin window the police launch come out to the boat, which had anchored about a hundred feet from the dock. He had no idea what the other passengers were thinking about the failure of the ship to dock and to open its doors for access to the city's waterfront. Folsom told the captain that he'd be in the library in a half hour.

But before that, Folsom knew he needed a drink. He left his cabin, bypassed the library and went up into the Alexander lounge. He ordered a stiff scotch on the rocks from one of masked blond bartenders, having no idea if it was *his* masked bartender,

and moved to a table near the stairs down to Hephaestion. He could hear music coming up from the sex club down there, and he wondered momentarily whether the evening show down there would go on in spite of Dieter's death and Roman's reaction to that.

"There you are, Mr. Folsom. I suppose we can talk here as well as in the library."

Folsom looked up to find he was being addressed by a pudgy middle-aged man with a very stern expression on his face.

"I am Inspector Fritz Manfeld of the Koblenz office of the Bundespolizei. I would like to ask you a few questions about this suspicious death. Und so, shall we get right down to it?"

Folsom took a deep swallow on his scotch and motioned for Manfeld to sit down at the table.

"I'm Detective Clint Folsom of the New York Police Department."

Manfeld raised his eyebrows. "And you are on this cruise for . . . ?"

"Pleasure," Folsom responded.

"I see," Manfeld answered after a brief pause in a flat tone. It was only then that Folsom realized what a bad choice of words he had made. But being on the cruise to do gay cruising had been his cover. He couldn't very well change his tune on that now.

"And did you know the deceased?"

"No, not either one," Folsom answered. This was quite a stretch, but technically correct. He'd know every nook and cranny of Dieter's body following last evening's performance and he knew much more than that about Bruno Meister, but he hadn't personally met either one of them. So his response wasn't really a lie.

"Either one?" Manfeld said with a set expression on his face. "Can you tell me how you know there was more than one, please? The captain indicated you entered the exercise room to see the body of the young man, Dieter Krungsheft, but we only discovered the other body after we boarded the ship."

"Excuse me?" Folsom asked with surprise and confusion. "Sigmund Frist and I saw Bruno Meister's body shortly after noon. Hasn't he reported that to you?"

"Sigmund Frist? Do you mean Inspector Sigmund Frist from Frankfurt?"

"Yes, he's the one who showed me the bodies."

"I know nothing about Sigmund Frist being involved in this. We're a long way from Frankfurt." Manfeld was forming a little set frown on his brow.

"He's a passenger on the cruise," Folsom pressed. "He called me in to view the crime scenes."

"I hardly think that's possible," Manfeld retorted, his voice taking on an indignant tone. "I hardly think Sigmund Frist would be on a cruise of this sort. And why would he show you the crime scene. And if he were here, why wouldn't he have reported to the authorities that he'd found Bruno Meister dead?"

"But he was there in Meister's cabin—and so was I."

"I've closely examined the passenger list, Mr. Folsom, and there is no Sigmund Frist on that list. Believe me, I would have recognized that name if I had seen it."

There was a slight pause then, and with a very cold and deliberate voice,

Manfeld said, "And so, you would not be surprised, Mr. Folsom if, when we research the
fingerprints in Meister's cabin and on the sexual device we found there, we find that you
had been in the cabin?"

"No, of course not. As I said, Frist took me in there and . . . what sexual device?"

We found a thick rubberized male phallus of nearly half a meter in length on the floor at the foot of the bed in Meister's cabin. It was bloodied, and we suspect it was used on both victims. You claim you didn't see that or handle it, Mr. Folsom? It was a little hard to miss."

Folsom's mind was racing. In the horror of what he saw and the short time that he was in the room, could he possibly have overlooked seeing a thick and bloody dildo of some sixteen inches in length on the floor by the body? No, he couldn't imagine that being possible. He was a trained cop. No matter how shocking the scene, his instincts would have made him memorize the most significant objects on site. He couldn't believe that the dildo could have been there when he was in the cabin.

While his mind was racing, a uniformed policeman had come into the lounge, whispered something in Manfeld's ear, and then withdrew again.

Manfeld gave Folsom a hard look. "According to the cabin attendants, you didn't occupy your cabin last night, Mr. Folsom. And an attendant was there this morning when you returned to your cabin."

Folsom started to form a response. Obviously he was going to get nowhere, if he told the inspector he was being fucked by Frist all night in the latter's cabin. And what was the number of that cabin?

Manfeld didn't really wait for an answer, though. He forged ahead with another question. "Do you have a pearl-handled hunting knife in your possession, Mr. Folsom? If we were to search your cabin, would we find such a weapon?"

Folsom was thrown off kilter. Certainly not, he was thinking. But he had seen such a knife. Where, he wondered.

Just then, the masked bartender came over and got down low between Manfeld and Folsom and started pestering Manfeld on having something to drink—on the house, captain's orders. At the same time, he was gesturing behind his back at Folsom, pointing toward the stairs down to Hephaestion.

Taking the hint, and not caring at all for the direction this police questioning was going, Folsom slipped out of his chair and down the stairs, while the bartender was occupying the attention of a flustered police detective.

As Folsom hit the bottom of the stairs, the spotlights were gleaming on the stage below, and Roman and Magnificent was strutting around in his almost-nothing costume just as he had the night before. He was apologizing that his assistant was indisposed, but that the show had to go on. Surely there was someone from the audience interested in a little bondage and S&M, he was saying.

"Ah, yes, up there, on the stairs. The perfect man," he was saying. "Shine the lights up there."

Folsom was blinded by the strobing lights. Roman couldn't mean him. But, incredibly, he seemed to mean him. And there was no better way, he thought, to escape the confusing and damning questions of the German policeman, if only for a few moments, than to hide in plain sight.

Thus, he gave no resistance when the voices from the audience surged around him, urging him to take the challenge.

He found himself down on the stage, being strapped, wrists and ankles, spreadeagle style to the Plexiglas crossbeam.

Roman came up close behind him and whispered in his ear, "Help me and I'll help you. Play to the audience." He then started ripping a perfectly good shirt and pants to shreds on Folsom's body with a box cutter, accompanied by wild cheering and enthusiastic applause. It hit Folsom then. Roman was not using the weapon he had used before. The previous evening he'd used a pearl-handled hunting knife. This must be the same knife Manfeld was accusing Folsom of having in his cabin. There was little Folsom could do about the implications of this now, however. He was trussed up to the crossbeam like a deer on a spit. The stage began to revolve.

He glanced up into the crowd and saw that Manfred and the uniformed policeman had come down the stairs and were frantically searching the banks of patrons with their eyes. But Folsom had guessed well. They did not expect to see Folsom on the stage as part of the act and so they didn't see him there. In short order they had left, seeking their escaped suspect somewhere else on the ship.

Roman flicked Folsom with the whip and he writhed in exaggerated response, playing for the audience as Roman had requested. He writhed for real, however, while Roman was applying and tweaking the clamps on his nipples and other sensitive areas of his skin. He was moaning and groaning. But his cock was filling out too. This rough treatment was getting him excited.

Roman was lathering up his asshole, and Folsom tensed his body against the crossbeam and howled to the ceiling as Roman thrust his gold-condom sheathed cock

into him from behind, on the other side of the crossbar, and rode him hard to loud chants of "houza" from the appreciative audience.

This was a departure from the previous evening's act as well, Folsom realized.

Last evening, Roman had used a mammoth dildo on Dieter. A mammoth dildo. Now
missing from the act. Folsom shivered at the thought. Meister had been fucked with a
mammoth dildo.

At length Roman whispered in Folsom's ear, "Now, I'm going to release you and you are going to take your bows with a grin on your face. And I'm going to help spirit you away and try to keep you out of the hands of the German police. I want you to find Dieter's killer—and you have to be free to do that. Agreed?"

Folsom nodded his head in agreement—not being sure he wasn't now responding to Dieter's killer—and Roman ballooned out the head of the condom with his semen deep inside Folsom, and the evening's entertainment was over. Roman ceremoniously released his captive, and the audience cheered its pleasure and appreciation. Roman and Folsom then took their bows and disappeared with a flourish through the door below the stairs and into the area that contained two crew cabins before reaching the door into the passenger corridor where the exercise room was located. Roman quickly told Folsom that one of the crew cabins was occupied by the three masked blond bartenders and the one across from it had once been occupied by Roman and Dieter. But Folsom was now replacing Dieter in Roman's bed, if not in his heart—but safe nonetheless in at least the short term from the police search of the passenger areas of the ship for the vanished American.

Chapter 8

The Choice of Suspicion or Trust

After his narrow escape from the pounding questions by the German police about Bruno Meister's death by way of accepting a pounding of his ass by Roman the Magnificent on stage at Hephaestion, Folsom meekly followed Roman into his cabin through the door under the stairs in the sex club. The cabin was the same size as Folsom's was and had the same two pull-down beds over benches with a table in between. But it wasn't nearly as well-appointed as Folsom's was. It also had the prolonged lived-in look and the jumbling of costumes and makeup boxes that nearly all entertainer's dressing rooms had.

As they propelled themselves into the room and Roman clicked and locked the door behind them, Folsom scurried to the corner of one of the pulled-down beds and made involuntary gestures of pulling the shreds of his clothes together to protect himself. It was rather an idiotic move of modesty in view of the fact that Roman had just finished fucking him from the rear and could arguably be said to know Folsom fully now. But it wasn't his honor or reputation Folsom was protecting. There was every reason to believe that Roman had killed Meister after Meister had killed Roman's assistant and lover, Dieter. Roman had followed Meister and Dieter out of the club the previous night, and it was highly likely the dildo Roman used his act and the knife found in Folsom's room, both of which had disappeared from the stage props for Roman's act, were the murder weapons in one or both killings.

Roman was standing there, his fists tight and his muscles taut. He had a look of rage and hurt about him, and with his gold outfittings and mane of white-gold hair, he

looked like a lion about to pounce. Folsom shrank back into the corner of the bed, ready for the onslaught, taking a defensive position.

"What?" Roman roared. "Why are you looking at me like that? Surely you don't think . . ."

"I don't know what to think," Folsom stammered. "This is all happening too . . ."

"Do you think I'd have saved you back there, if I thought you'd . . . ?"

And then Roman stopped and gave Folsom a look of horror. "You don't think I ?"

"What am I to think?" Folsom spat back. "You've motive for Meister's killing. He attacked and brutalized your assistant even before they'd left the stage last night. And there's the knife and the dildo. Where are the ones you used in the act last night?"

"I don't know," Roman said, his voice having turned to a frustrated wail. He sat down heavily in the opposite bed and lowered his head to his hands, defeated for the moment. "I have no idea where the props are."

Then he looked up, with a defiant look on his face. "But I didn't kill Meister. I wanted to. I've wanted to for a very long time. But I didn't do it. And I'd never have killed Dieter. Dieter was my life."

Roman was on the edge. His voice had a sobbing quality to it now. Folsom sat up on the bed, using a cajoling voice now.

"Tell me. Tell me why Meister was able just to walk away with Dieter last night like that. Surely you knew what Meister had in mind to do with Dieter."

Another sob. "Yes, of course I knew. But Meister owned Dieter. He owned us all. He took Dieter and Tiho and many of the rest from an orphanage in Croatia. Whatever

they have faced and suffered here, it's better than they could have expected where they came from."

"Then you had no real grudge against Meister?" Folsom asked quietly, soothingly.

"Unfortunately, not true," Roman said with an air or resignation. "Meister was about to send Dieter and some of the others back to Croatia and break in a whole new set of crew for this boat." Roman laughed bitterly. "He said they were getting too old and that he fancied more variety. I tried to keep Dieter; I even offered to buy him. But Meister had just laughed at me."

"And Tiho?" Folsom asked. "Was he to be sent back too?"

"Yes, and others as well."

"And the bartenders in the Alexander lounge? Them too."

"Just Ralf. He wasn't like the others, though."

Folsom didn't directly ask which one Ralf was. Instead he asked, "And was it Ralf who Meister was with before he took Dieter off last night? The one who followed them out with you?"

"Yes, that was Ralf."

"And why was Meister sending Ralf away?"

"He had gotten too cocky. He'd become Meister's favorite in his little sex games.

But he was taking control too often. Meister didn't trust him anymore."

"And Ralf didn't want to leave?"

"No, certainly not. . . . Wait, you don't think *Ralf* . . . ?"

"Someone did it. I have no idea who killed your Dieter, if Meister didn't do it himself. But there were several who had motive for Meister's death. And Ralf . . ."

"But Ralf saved you. I sent him up to the lounge to help you escape. Surely you can't think . . ."

"Someone killed Meister," Folsom repeated. He had taken Roman's hand and was willing the older man to look into his eyes, trying to gauge what was surprise from foreknowledge and guilt from innocence. "Ralf had motive and means as much as any of the rest of us. If you didn't kill Meister and I didn't, Ralf might . . ."

"You didn't kill Meister?" Roman blurted out.

"No, no, of course not," Folsom said. And then he stopped and really looked into Roman's eyes. "Did you save me back there because you thought . . . ? Did you believe that I had caught Meister with Dieter's body and then had done the same to him in revenge? Is *that* why you saved me?"

Roman didn't answer. He just lowered his eyes, shuddered, and let out a big sob.

Tears were flowing now and he lifted his head and let out a primeval yell. Folsom moved to the bed beside him and took Roman in his arms and rocked him back and forth.

"There, there, shush," Folsom murmured as he rocked Roman's torso. "You are so tense. You have every right to be angry. I didn't kill either one of them, but you can take your rage out on me, if you like. For whatever reason, you saved me back there."

They went into a 69 position on the bed and endured both Roman's vigorous face fucking of Folsom's cock and his almost brutal attack on Folsom's own prick with his teeth and mouth. When Roman was filled out, Folsom stripped his Roman skirt off of

him and looked around for a condom packet. But Roman was too worked up for that nicety. He pushed Folsom down onto the bed on his back, spread his legs, and thrust into him, diving again and again, coming nearly all of the way out and then plunging in again. He was marshaling all of his anger and frustration and grief over the death of his lover, offering a different kind of release and death to Folsom. Folsom writhed under him, experiencing his own frustration and grief at the loss of his own lover, welcoming the death by ejaculation that Roman was offering. Sighing for it; moaning for it; begging for it. Naked cock skin reaming the naked skin of an undulating ass passage. Thrusting, thrusting, thrusting. And then exploding, with a shared vision of releasing death. Folsom's insides flooded with a warm cascade of fluid. And collapse.

Once more Roman was crying, and once more Folsom embraced and consoled him, nestling the grieving man's butt into his groin. And now it was Folsom fucking Roman. But this time it was a more loving, languid, giving taking and receiving—a sharing of grief and consolation.

In time the grieving of both was relieved by the cover of sleep, their arms entwined, Folsom's cock still deep inside Roman's ass. Roman slept quietly, exhausted by the exertion of gripping and dealing with his frustration and anger.

Folsom's dreams were more troubled, however. He was being pursued through the ship by Manfeld and a bevy of uniformed policeman, who seemed to be Tiho, the bartender now identified as Ralf, Sigmund, Roman, and even the dead Dieter. He was turning away here and there from slashings of a pearl-handled knife and was been clubbed by a mammoth dildo. He was searching for some place to hide, but there wasn't anywhere where the uniformed figures didn't find him. And then he found himself

in a helicopter of a sort, but more primitive than a helicopter—some sort of straw contraction. And beside him, taking up most of the space, was the grinning African potentate. And the ebony giant was whisking him away from danger on the ship. But then Folsom found himself on a bed covered with the hides of exotic creatures. And his arms and legs were spread-eagled and tied to the corners of the bed. And the naked African king, his body glistening with sweat and radiating power and force, was dancing around below him, a large dildo in one hand and a pearl-handled hunting knife in the other, both of which were covered in blood. Native African boys were standing beside the bed and shooing flies away and moving the air with large palm fronds. And the ebony giant was chanting and laughing. Folsom's ass was being massively entered, and a thick tube, whether the dildo or the African's cock, Folsom knew not, was invading him ever deeper. And he was screaming a gasping and bucking against and with the invader. The African was huddled over him, leering down at him, the knife was poised over Folsom's breast . . .

"Wake up," Roman was saying in a loud, hoarse whisper. "You're moaning and crying out to beat the band. You'll have the police down here in no time."

"What's the use," Folsom was saying bitterly as he came out of his nightmare.

"They'll find me sooner or latter anyway. They'll search the whole ship. And they've surely already started doing that methodically."

"But that doesn't mean they'll find you here," Roman said. "We can always try our best to prevent that." Then he stood and opened a drawer in a built-in bureau at the foot of the bed and took out a small key. He walked over to the closet, opened it, and stepped in. Almost immediately, he told Folsom to come over and take a look inside.

And when he did, he discovered that the panel at the back of the closet was open and there was a small locker about four feet high and six feet wide and deep through the opening.

"What . . . ?"

"This is an unused storage locker built into dead space between here and the wall of the club room," Roman explained. "No one's come to use it the entire time I've been on this ship. There's a good chance it isn't even on any plans the captain may have given the police. It's a better hope than none. When and if the police come, you can stow away in here."

"But will I be given enough notice?"

"Both doors into this corridor have buzzers on them. We want to know if any of the passengers are straying where they aren't wanted. If someone's coming, the buzzer will . . ."

And just then a buzzer *did* sound. Roman pushed Folsom into the storage bin and shut the door firmly behind him. It was pitch black, and it was with great dread that Folsom heard the turning of the key.

He was locked in. He didn't even know if he could really trust Roman and now he was Roman's prisoner. In the dark. All alone, with his ragged, heaving breath to remind him how terrified he was.

Chapter 9

Thinking Inside the Box

Folsom heard some muffled discussion from the other side of the door between his cramped, dark prison and the back panel on the closet in Roman's cabin and then some rustling around in the cabin followed by the slamming of the cabin door and then . . . silence . . . for the longest time.

A good thing he wasn't claustrophobic, Folsom was thinking. And then thinking about that, he started to become claustrophobic. Was he getting enough air? Why couldn't his eyes adjust to the dark? Would Roman ever return to set him free or would he die in here? Or was Roman really the killer and when he opened the door, Folsom would be met with the sweep of a pearl-handled knife? No, it couldn't be that. The police seemed already to have found that knife. But they found it in his own cabin—or so they wanted him to think. What was it that Manfeld said? Did he actually say they'd found the knife in his cabin? And, if so, how could that be? Was he hyperventilating? Was it hotter in here now than when he'd been shut up?

Folsom pinched himself hard on the arm and willed himself to slow down his breathing and the racing of his mind. Breathe in and let it out slowly. Again. Must become calm.

And when he had become calm, he started to work the problem out. Roman had thought that he, Folsom, had killed Meister—or at least purported to think that—and was willing to help him for that very reason. And he *would* have killed Meister if someone hadn't beaten him to that. That's what he had come here to do in the first place. Had he let Roman know that? No, maybe not. If he did, and if Roman killed Meister, there would

be no real reason Roman would kill him too. They still could cooperate. It wasn't Folsom's place to bring Meister's killer to the bar. He was an American cop off duty, not a German cop. It was Sigmund Frist's responsibility. No, not that either; that Manfeld guy was investigating the death. Frist made clear he wasn't on the cruise in his official capacity. But why then was he seeming to take charge? And then he disappeared. But of course if the German police didn't know of his preferences and that he'd be on a cruise like this, of course he'd have disappeared as soon as the police showed up. And Frist had made quite clear that he had joined the cruise at Rudesheim so he would be noticed joining the cruise in Mainz, which was in his jurisdiction. And why had he been arguing with Meister in that café in Rudesheim? The thoughts and fears were pressing—were becoming oppressive.

Folsom was hyperventilating again—both his mind and pulse racing at an increasing rate. Calm down. Breath slower. Purge your mind. Let your mind work on this subconsciously. Think of something else. Roman's cock stroking in and out of your ass, filling it, rotating in it, mining your insides as only a mature, experienced top can do. And the maddening variety of it. At first forceful and vigorous from anger and frustration and then turned to a tender, languid fucking. The way he played your nipples and stroked the curves and crevices of your body. The sensuous sucking on your toes as his cock pulled out and then stroked back into you to the hilt. . . . Your sighing and moaning. This is how you liked taking it—rough and forceful and then slow and totally possessing you. It was the way Brad had given it to you. The best of orgiastic deaths.

There was a rumbling from below in the ship, and Folsom felt the pull. The ship was under way. It hadn't docked in Koblenz at all. It was supposed to be docked here

for a full day. But it was on the move through the water and picking up speed. Where was that detective from Koblenz then? Was he still on board? And where was Roman? Was Folsom ever going to get out of this dark box? Who else cold possibly know he was in here?

Ralf, one of the masked bartender triplets? Ralf had helped save Folsom from the police. And Ralf had fucked him hard and had obviously enjoyed doing so. They had some connection; they both loved what they got from each other. Could Roman have had time to let Ralf know Folsom was locked in this storage box? But was Ralf the one who had killed Meister? And would he feel threatened by an American detective? Did Ralf know he was a police detective?

Dieter. Who killed Dieter? The rational explanation was that Meister killed Dieter in a similar way that he had killed Folsom's lover and partner, Brad Roberts, and that Meister had subsequently been killed in the same way because he had killed Dieter. That was the only rational explanation for these deaths. That works out if Dieter died before Meister did. The police would know that eventually, but how could Folsom find out? God, why was he being the cop on this? He didn't give a fuck who killed Meister. But should he care who killed Dieter? Wasn't that the key? And who would be motivated to torture and kill Meister if Meister had killed Dieter? It all came back to Roman.

Think, think. No, calm down. Conserve your energy and your breath. Is the air getting stale in here? Did I hear a buzzer? Was that a sound in the cabin? Somebody entering the cabin?

Folsom put his ear to the door of his prison. There indeed were men's voices, muffled but distinct. One angry; the other placating.

"Swear you had nothing to do with this and that you don't know where the American is, Roman."

"Yes, I swear, I swear."

The sound of a slap and a yelp.

"Maybe I can fuck the truth out of you."

"No, no, Sten. I swear. I could never had killed Dieter and I didn't kill Meister. Oh, God no, you're hurting my arm, Sten."

"Spread 'em. Feet apart. I don't give a fuck about Dieter. But it's all ruined now. If you killed Meister, you ruined everything."

"Ohhhh. Not so fast not so deep! Your fingers. You're killing me. Give me time.

Gr-o-a-n. I didn't kill Meister."

"But you wanted to. You wanted to kill Meister for what he was doing to Dieter, didn't you? Get your hands away from there. Take it like a man—like you gave it to that prick Dieter each night on stage. Not so easy to take what you give, is it? But what I have is longer and thicker than what you've been sticking Dieter with, isn't it?" Ughhh."

"Ahhhhhh, nooooo. Oh, God. You're too big. It's too . . . ahhhhhh!"

"And you don't know where the American is?"

Moan, grunt, groan.

"Tell me."

Muffled pleading and groaning from Roman.

"Tell me."

"No, no, I don't know. I swear. Oh God, stop. You're splitting me."

"Jesus, you're tight. So prissy and chummy only with that Dieter. Well, Dieter's gone now. There are other cocks in play. I'll stop when you're begging for it. You'll tell me if you see the American, won't you?"

"Y-e-s-s. Ohhhhh."

"And you love me inside you, don't you? You can't get enough of what Sten has got, can you?"

"Yes. I mean no. Ohhhhhh, I don't . . ."

A sharp cry from whoever was assaulting Roman. And then, "There, that does you. I've marked you now. Now you're my bitch. I plan to pick up the pieces from Meister. Are you with me on that?"

A muffled "Yes."

"Remember what I said. We can tag the American with this. The scuttlebutt is that the knife was found in his cabin and his fingerprints are on the door of Meister's cabin and on the dildo. It's a slam dunk if they can find a motive. I'll get you a replacement for Dieter in the act. But your ass is mine now. Don't you forget it."

The sound of a slamming door and of subsiding moaning and sobbing from inside the cabin. But Folsom, still locked in his dark prison, hardly heard these sounds at all.

The dildo, he was thinking, a shiver running down his spine. The guy who had brutalized Roman said Folsom's fingerprints were found on the dildo. There wasn't a dildo there when he saw the murder scene in Meister's cabin, Folsom reasoned. Maybe one was there and he just overlooked it in the short time he had been in the cabin? No, he was a trained police detective, and an extra-size dildo is a little hard to ignore. The

prints on the door, sure, Folsom could remember having opened and closed the cabin door. But on the dildo? How had his prints gotten on the dildo? Or was the scuttlebutt around the ship been off the mark? Just false gossip, as most gossip was? Yeah, that must be it. But he could feel the noose tightening around his neck—and they hadn't even gotten around to discovering the strength of the motive he had to kill Meister. He couldn't feel indignant about that at all; he'd meant to kill Meister all along. The irony was that he didn't get the satisfaction but might swing for the crime anyway. Talk about divine justice.

Chapter 10

Escape and Its Cost

"You heard?" Roman asked Folsom when he'd unlocked the storage bin behind his closet and stood back as Folsom stumbled out into the light.

Squinting his eyes, Folsom said. "Everything."

"Oh," was as much as Roman said as he stumbled back and collapsed on the bed. He was holding a tissue to a bleeding nose, and bruises were already beginning to form on his cheek and torso. What looked that finger prints were materializing in blue on either side of his rib cage.

"Thanks, man," Folsom said as he sat down beside Roman and put his arm around his shoulders protectively. "Thanks for not giving me up. Who was that, anyway?"

"That was Sten. You'll want to stay away from him."

"And who is Sten?"

"He's one of three bartenders," You probably heard that he's making a bid to take over Meister's operations. He's just nasty enough to succeed in that."

"So let's see. You say I should trust Ralf and can't trust Sten, and they are virtual twins."

"Well, they're not really twins. When the masks come off you can tell them apart.

But I guess that won't help you if you haven't seen them unmasked."

"Does Sten have a scorpion tattooed on his groin?" Folsom asked.

"No, that would be Ralf." Then Roman looked up and he smiled. He winced from the pain, but he couldn't help but smile. "So, you really do know Ralf, don't you?"

"That's right, we've managed to meet."

"He does get around and I'm not surprised that he zeroed in on you. You're quite a catch." Then he winced again.

"Come on, you need to get cleaned up," Folsom said. "And you'll need to get those bruises attended to."

"You need a shower too," Roman said. "I can tell it was really hot in that storage room. Now, your manly smell turns me on. But if they search the room again, I'd hate to see you give yourself away. Come we'll shower together—then we'll find some clothes for you to wear. We've got to get you out of here sooner or later, and you'll start a riot going through the ship wearing those shredded clothes."

When they got into the bathroom, Roman rummaged around in the compartment under the sink and came up with a new toothbrush. "Here, you can brush your teeth. I'll meet you in the shower."

And meet him in the shower he did. When Folsom pulled aside the shower curtain, there Roman was, under a stream of water, his shoulders and heels plastered to the tiles, but his hips arched out and his cock curved up, hard, ready, and inviting. With a laugh, Folsom turned and backed into the tight shower and settled on Roman's cock and was mined deeply as Roman soaped his conquest up and they rinsed off together.

As soon as they were out of the shower and toweling off, Folsom returned to the crisis at hand.

"So, where do we go from here, and why is the ship under way? Why didn't it dock in Koblenz? Is Manfeld still aboard?"

Roman responded in reserve order. "Yes, Manfeld's aboard, but the scuttlebutt around the crew is that he got dressed down for having let you slip away and not finding you. The Bundespolizei have directed the ship to go directly on to Cologne, where there's a regional police headquarters. I assume the ship will be swarming with police as soon as we dock there, and they'll take the River God apart board by board if they have to find you."

"And the up side of that is?" Folsom asked, as he picked through the clothes Roman had on offer for him to wear.

"We do have a plan."

"We," Folsom asked. "How many 'we' are we talking about here."

"Ralf, Tiho, and I," Roman answered. "We've put our heads together, and we'll have you off the ship almost as fast as the police in Cologne are coming on board."

"I'm not sure what good that will be," Folsom responded. Roman and his friends were amateurs at this. They had no idea the vice the police would have Folsom in. "All of the passengers' passports are being held at the reception desk. And I'll be completely lost in Cologne. They'll pick me up there almost as fast as they'd find me on this ship."

Roman laughed. "Ralf, Tiho, and I are survivors. You have no idea what Tiho and I had to do to get out of Eastern Europe to the West. Not all of the passports are at the reception desk. Tiho managed to get yours pulled even while the police detective was interviewing you—and he took another one for good measure. They realize yours is gone—and that was another thing Manfeld was dressed down for. But they're not likely to notice that the other passport is missing until the River God docks for the last time in Amsterdam and the passengers are picking up their passports to leave the ship."

"I don't understand," Folsom said. "What good is having the other passport?"

"Tiho was clever. He took one of a man who looks a bit like you but has noticeably different colored hair and a distinctive tattoo on his neck. He's got an ear stud too."

"And so?" Folsom asked.

"And so, look around you. This is a dressing room for a stage show. By the time we dock in Cologne, you're going to have that hair color and an inked tattoo. I'm sorry to say that the ear piercing isn't going to be temporary, except that the hole should close up again fairly quickly if you don't want to keep it. Personally, I think you'll look stunning with a diamond in your ear. The important thing is that you'll have a relatively clean passport to use in Cologne and you'll still have your own to help you get out of the European Union area at some port the police won't be watching."

"I've never been to Cologne; it's unlikely I'll be able to maneuver there," Folsom said, "and I can't just walk away from this case. I don't care who killed Meister, other than resenting that they got there before me, but Dieter deserves having his murder solved."

"If you didn't kill Dieter, the German police will find out who did. They are very good at their jobs," Roman responded. "But why do you say you resent someone else getting to Meister before you did?"

Then Folsom told Roman everything—about the murder of his partner and lover, Brad Roberts, and about his decision to track Meister down and personally making him pay for that crime.

"Yes, I can understand that kind of anger and wish for revenge," Roman said with a quiet sense of determination in his voice. "I feel the same way about Dieter. But don't worry, we'll get you out of here and I've already been in contact with someone in Cologne who will take care of you if you give him what he wants?"

"Give him what he wants?" Folsom asked.

"Yes. He's partial to handsome American tail. He'll let you stay in his flat. But he says if he's to take the risk of harboring a fugitive, his price is that you share his bed as well. Do you think you can handle that?"

"No problem, I'm sure," Folsom answered.

"You sure? He's a big bruiser of a guy—and can be pretty rough."

"Even better," Folsom answered with a grin.

"OK, so let's see how you do as a silver blond. I guess we'd better make you a total silver blond. You never know when . . ."

The sound of a buzzer cut through the walls of the cabin, and Folsom was bundled back into the storage bin behind the closet and he was locked into the darkness while yet another search was conducted by the policeman who had accompanied Detective Manfeld on board in Koblenz.

This time, Folsom was able to keep his calm even though he didn't like being shut up in this coffin the second time any better than the first. But this time, he could begin to see a way out of this predicament. He realized, though, that the case would have to be solved, and someone other than he had to be fingered for the murders on the ship, before he would have a prayer of returning to the States, not to mention to his NYPD duties. So, it was up to him to help solve these crimes. And the longer he thought

and calmly weighed the evidence and the possibilities, the more a nagging question needled at him. As soon as he could if he was successful in disappearing into the streets of Cologne, he'd have to get to a phone with an international connection and check this nagging question out.

When Roman opened the door again, they barely had time for Folsom's cosmetic transformation before Tiho was knocking at the door and saying it was time for them to try to move forward.

Folsom did ask Roman to check out one thing for him, though, and pass the answer on through the big bruiser friend, if possible. "Could you find a subtle way to ask the captain if he will confirm that Sigmund Frist was on board? I'm worried about what has happened to Frist, and I saw he and the captain together; I know the captain knows he was here when the bodies were found. Oh, and do you have a roster of the ship's crew I could have?"

Roman rummaged around in a drawer and came up with a roster and handed it to Folsom. Then he said he would query the captain about Frist but that Folsom needed to worry about Folsom. He and Tiho needed to try to get to the other part of the ship while coffee and desserts were still being served in the Ambrosia Restaurant and everyone was watching their approach to Cologne.

This was the most dangerous part of Roman's plan. Getting to the other side of the ship and to the other store room that Tiho had picked out to hide Folsom in until they could execute their escape plan. The timing on that would have to be precise.

They had no trouble getting through the public areas of the ship. They encountered no one but passengers, who were more interested in each other than in a

waiter and a bottle blond, no matter how cute they both were. It was only as they were approaching an alcove off to the left of the main corridor of the stern crew area that they encountered a threat. And it was a threat in big time. Manfeld was bearing down on them. He was holding a cell phone to his ear and was having an animated conversation.

Tiho pushed Folsom off into the alcove, backed himself against the door into the laundry room, and pulled Folsom to him. He took Folsom's hand and planted on his basket and brought Folsom's lips down to his and went into a firm lip lock, accompanied by deep-throated moaning. Manfeld passed them right by, carefully not even looking at them, up to his chin now with disgust about what was going on on this ship.

"OK," it's safe to go on now," Tiho said, moving to push Folsom away. "It's just a bit farther now. You can wait in a storage closet for a half an hour or so while we dock in Cologne."

"No," Folsom said in a husky voice. "You shouldn't start something you don't want to see finished. And I've had enough of storage closets. This laundry room suits me just fine."

For nearly the next half hour, several of the crew members passed the laundry room, and they even looked in to check out the moaning and groaning, but none of them were surprised. It was just Tiho and one of the passengers again. Tiho was bareassed on the top of a washing machine, and a studly silver-blond passenger with a flashy diamond ear stud had Tiho's legs spread wide and was fucking him hard and chewing on his tits.

Before they departed, Tiho was looking quite worried and concerned, and it seemed like he wanted to tell Folsom something but couldn't.

"What is it? What's wrong, Tiho?"

"I can't say. Not here, not now. But if you are able to meet me in the cathedral tomorrow afternoon at four, I do have something you need to know. But I'm afraid of telling you now; afraid of what you'll do."

There was no time to pin Tiho down on this. Folsom almost tried to make time, but suddenly Tiho was gone and Folsom was standing in a corner of the kitchen, ready for the plan to unfold, a plan that did not allow him to linger beyond the assigned time.

Even Folsom had to admit with appreciation that the escape plan was quite sleek. The ship docked on the Rhine right next to the train station and the famous Cologne cathedral. The main gangplank came down and the waiting legion of police officials bustled on board. As the last of them entered the ship's foyer, the service gangplank at the stern of the ship, where the kitchen was, came down for fewer than ten seconds, a figure scurried off and moved quickly into the shadows of the trees on the river promenade, and the gangplank was pulled right back in, as if it had never been extended in the first place.

The directions on the slip of paper in Folsom's hand were quite clear in coordination with the tourist map of Cologne he had been given. As directed, he went through the bustling train station, where it would have been nearly impossible to follow him from any distance if someone was tracking him from the ship and then up into the Dom Platz, the cathedral square. Three streets past cathedral square, down the Hohe Strasse shopping street with its teaming masses of people aching to drop their euros, Folsom turned on Brückenstrasse, which melded into Glockengasse. One more turn into Krebsgasse, and he found the innocuous section of flats he was seeking. He

pressed the button above the name he had been given and he was buzzed in immediately. The connection had been made. The man named Fritz was waiting for him on the third landing.

Roman had been spot on. He was a big bruiser of a brute—well over six feet tall, bald and heavily tattooed and muscled. Folsom had been told he was a bouncer in a popular nightclub in Cologne, and Folsom could well believe he'd be really good at that job.

There was no language barrier. His English was excellent—and explicit and to the point.

"Roman said I could try you out before I committed. You have a problem with that?"

"No," Folsom answered. What would it have mattered even if he did, Folsom wondered.

"Well, come on in then and strip."

* * * *

"Oh God, oh God, Oh Jesus. Yessss!"

Folsom was headed toward a good death.

Fritz had shown him a thick strip of black leather with thinner belt-like extensions at either end and asked if Folsom knew what it was for. Folsom had seen a plow belt before and didn't register consternation that Fritz had one. He was amazed and fully appreciative, though, that Fritz could support his full weight with it from behind him, with the belt stretched around Folsom's belly and holding him suspended in air in front of

Fritz, as the burly German bouncer fucked him hard and deep from the rear. And fucked him and fucked him and fucked him.

When Folsom was allowed to fall, exhausted on the three-quarter bed in Fritz's one-room flat, he had only two questions. "Did I pass? Can I stay?"

"Oh, yes, you passed," Fritz answered with a big grin on his face. "Sehr Gut!"

It was good that Folsom had gotten a good nap the second time he'd been locked in the storage bin behind Roman's closet, because Fritz was so pleased with his new toy that he woke Folsom repeatedly through the night with panzer assaults on his ass canal.

Chapter 11

Early Morning Delight

"There, do you like it like that?"

"Oh, God, yes. Like that. And deeper, deeper." Folsom was groaning at the fucking he was receiving from the bruiser.

"Then open wider so I can get down there. Ya, like that. Ya, that's good. Sehr aut."

Ohhh, ahhhh. m-o-a-nnnn.

Folsom was on his knees on the mattress, his chest flat on the bed and hanging onto the brass rods in the headboard of Fritz the bruiser's bed for all he was worth. The bruiser was on his knees behind Folsom. He held Folsom's hips steady with his beefy hands, and he'd been working at getting his cock deep inside Folsom for a couple of minutes now. The morning light, such as it was, was streaming in the window above the bed, across naked, heaving, sweating bodies. It had been a wild, semen-flooded night, but it was going to be a rather gloomy day in Cologne. Already the street noise of a busy commerce day intruded into the room, mixing with German exclamations of passion and approval and Folsom's gruntings and groanings and cries and sighs.

Plumbing deeper and deeper. One of the bruiser's fists went to between Folsom's shoulder blades, pushing him into the mattress, urging Folsom to raise his butt even farther to his invading sledgehammer. Pump. Push. Pump. Dive. Moooaaannn.

"Oh, Christ. Oh, God. I . . . can't . . . take . . . any . . . ohhhhhhhhhh."

Folsom's fists were flexing and gripping on the brass rods to the rhythm of the German's intense stroking and digging. He wanted to scream. To cry out in ecstasy and

release and throbbing fulfillment. But the bruiser had warned him the night before of how thin the walls were in these blocks of flats. So, he bunched up sheeting into his mouth from the pillow his face was being smashed into and bit down on the wadding hard.

Retreat. Slide. Relief. Plunge. "Arghhhhhhh. Yes, yes, oh y-e-s-s!" "Gute, gute. I'm in."

"Ooffff." The bruiser was pushing Folsom's hips to the mattress and coming down with him, remaining dug in to his root. His chest was pushing into Folsom's shoulders, and his strong legs were encasing Folsom's thighs and pulling them together.

"Oh, oh." Stretched and filled like never before that night. Throbbing cock, buried deep. Ass wall, undulating, caressing engorged cock. The German grunting and groaning now as well. Hand working its way between Folsom's chest and the mattress, finding and tweaking a nipple. The thumb of the other hand wrapping around and finding Folsom's mouth. Folsom pulling it in with his lips and giving suck. Folsom's fists on the brass rods. Opening and closing. Tightening and flexing—to the rhythm of the fuck.

Fritz began swiveling his midsection around on Folsom's butt now. Grinding into his ass at all angles and Folsom was panting and groaning, loving every second of it. Whimpering to be taken deep and hard.

The bruiser loosing control now, going wild. Rotating his cock around inside

Folsom with undulating movements of his hips. Withdrawing and slamming back in and
rotating his pelvis. Both crying out in harmony for the intensity of it, urging more
intensity. Folsom moving his hips in a countermotion against Fritz. Both trying to move
as one synchronized perfect fucking machine.

Folsom cried out in death, the death of ejaculation. Warm, sticky fluid spreading between his belly and the mattress.

The bruiser came back up on his knees behind Folsom and pulled his cock out. He jerked the condom off and flipped it onto the floor, on top of the others lying there. Throbbing tool in hand, he stroked three times, gave a cry and spouted white, cloudy semen across the small of Folsom's back. The two sighed and murmured, as the bruiser spread the fluid around on Folsom's back with his still-hard cock, working the salve into Folsom's skin. Folsom came up on his knees and turned his face to the German's and the two kissed deeply, the bruiser holding Folsom to him with a hand on his belly.

When they disengaged, the bruiser pushed Folsom's chest back to the mattress with a firm hand between his shoulder blades and reached over to the nightstand and fished out another packet. He opened that with his teeth, and extracted the disk. He rolled the condom out on his still-engorged cock and then entered Folsom once again with a forceful thrust and a slap on his butt cheek.

Folsom moaned deeply. His fists opened and closed on the brass rods. Flexing and releasing—to the rhythm of the fuck.

Later, the room now as bathed as it was going to be in the light of day, the German was cuddling Folsom, both stretched out on the bed, Folsom's back encased by the German's strong torso, humming with great satisfaction to themselves in the afterglow of night-long sex.

"That was incredible," the bruiser whispered. "You can stay here forever. I don't care what you did. I'll protect you."

"That sounds nice," Folsom said. "But I think it's afternoon already. I have to be somewhere at four this afternoon and I want a couple of hours free to do something first—and all of this lovin' has made me hungry. Do you think I have enough tail on credit here for some food."

"Naturlich," the German responded with a hoarse laugh. "Here, you can eat this again." And then he took his cock in his hand and slapped it against Folsom's thigh.

"Later. Gladly later," Folsom said, joining in the bruiser's joke. "But how about some real food now, and then I'd best be on about my business."

As they were finishing up their meal, the German covered Folsom's hand with his and looked deeply into his eyes with some concern.

"I'm worried about you out there on the street alone. If you have to go out, why don't you let me go with you—to protect your back?"

Folsom tried to keep the conversation light. "I think you're the one I need to protect my back from. How many times have you attacked me from the rear already last night and today?"

"Maybe once or twice," the bruiser answered with a straight face. And then he broke into a broad grin. "OK, OK, maybe five or six or nine times. But you seemed to be enjoying my visits. Viellicht we have time for another visit before you have to go, nein?" His eyes were twinkling and the hand he wasn't covering Folsom's with had found Folsom's basket.

"No, nein," Folsom said with a laugh as he slapped at the German's intrusive hand. "But seriously, don't you have to work today? Roman said something about you being security for a club."

"Ya, it's a very nice club," the German answered. "It's called Chains. You'd fit in there very well. I'll have to take you there. But, no I don't have to work today. Yesterday and today are my days off. I'll have to work tomorrow night. There's a lot of time for us between now and then."

"Well, I'm sure I can handle this little outing on my own. I think I can find the cathedral again without any trouble, and I found my way here, so I know I can get back. You'd better sleep today. You'll need your rest and strength for tonight. I'll be back."

Both gave a hearty laugh and moved into a "good-bye for now" kiss.

At fifteen after three, Folsom was back on the street and headed in the direction of the Rhine and the cathedral, whose towers he could see in the distance as he reached each intersection. He also was looking for the Internet café he'd seen on his way to the bruiser's last night.

Ah, yes, there it was—on Brückenstrasse. A café downstairs and a bank of Internet-linked computers along a counter with stools on the second floor. He paid 2 euros to cover the first hour of use and went up the stairs. The clerk had told him which computer had an English-language keyboard. He wouldn't have known that the Europeans had a slightly different keyboard than Americans did. If he hadn't been given the right keyboard, all of his y's would have come out as z's, and vice versa. Probably no problem, really. Trudi probably could have figured it out. Trudi, the squad's researcher was brilliant—and fast.

Folsom was praying Trudi would be fast today—and not prone to asking too many questions. Actually, it would be morning where she was.

Trudi was great, though. After he had keyed in that he couldn't answer questions and needed this information ASAP, she settled right down to business. He tapped out the eight names he needed a specific question answered for and then sat, agonizing, at the machine, nursing the cup of strong coffee he'd brought up from the café downstairs. He had finished that one and was pining for another before Trudi got back to him. But he stuck with the computer. He couldn't risk missing Trudi's answer.

When the answer appeared on the screen, he almost couldn't believe it—but then, it did make sense. Those four. Not the others, just those four. He'd rather hoped it would only be two, then he'd have known what to do. But there were four of them. He'd have to give this some more thought.

He looked up at the clock. It already has hard on four o'clock, and he had a good three blocks to go before he reached the cathedral. And then there was the problem of finding Tiho. The cathedral was huge, as was the plaza in front of it. And it always was swarming with visitors. One of the largest in the world, it had escaped bombing in World War II for its value as a beacon for Allied bombers, and so it was one of the most important surviving religious buildings on the European continent.

Folsom reached the cathedral plaza. He scanned the crowds, but there was no Tiho there as far as he could tell. So, he went inside and moved around the periphery of the main chamber.

There, there, over in the corner. He could see him now. Tiho was there. And he looked scared and lost and very, very nervous. Tiho had seen Folsom now and gestured for Folsom to follow him. Tiho moved off toward a small side chapel, where few were praying and wandering about. When Folsom entered the chapel looked about

in panic. Tiho was nowhere to be found. But then Folsom saw that a door to a confessional cubicle was open and he could barely see that Tiho was inside, beckoning to him.

Folsom entered the confessional and hugged the small waiter, trying to assure him and let him know he was safe. They turned in the cubicle until Folsom's back was to the back wall. Tiho was in a state, and Folsom endeavored to calm him—with kisses and fumblings and strategic uncoverings and Tiho sinking his ass on Folsom's cock as the latter half crouched in the confining cubicle and ran the slight, burbling waiter up and down on his pole. The young man was arched back against the confessional door, his legs spread as wide as he could get them around Folsom's hips, his feet pressed into the back corners of the confessional, his fingers laced behind his head in the grill of the window in the confessional door.

"Oh, oh, you fill me so. You're so good in me. I think I'm going to . . ." And he did come, and the ejaculation caused him to calm down enough that, while still gently pumping Tiho's ass up and down on his hard cock, Folsom could coax him to talk., Folsom asked Tiho what he had to pass on and why he couldn't have told him on the ship.

"If I'd . . ." m-o-a-n "told you I'd seen Frist in the captain's cabin back there on the ship last night, you wouldn't have left when you did," Tiho said. And then, "Oh, yes, oh, yes. Just like that . . ."

"You're probably right," Folsom said, his hands relentlessly pumping the hips of the young man up and down on his tool. "Go on, I'm glad to know Frist is still alive and with the captain, but there's more to it than that, isn't there?" "Yes . . Ahhhhhh, yes. . . I was serving a dinner to them both in the captain's cabin, and I . . . oh God, yes . . . I heard snatches of them talking about the murders.

And then he came in and . . . Ugh." Tiho lurched again, and Folsom assumed he'd had a second orgiastic death. But it wasn't that kind of death.

"He? He who, Tiho?"

But Tiho couldn't answer. He was just hunched there, his back against the cubicle door and his legs now dangling on the outside of Folsom's thighs, his feet on the confessional bench. He had a surprised, dazed, lost look in his eyes. An intense look. A look edged with pain and an unanswered question of "why."

"Tiho, Tiho," Folsom put his arms around the young waiter as he slumped against Folsom's chest. And Folsom felt his hands get wet. He pulled them away. Blood. His hands were covered with blood.

Chapter 12

Running for Safety

Folsom was stunned and immobilized. He shook Tiho and looked into his eyes, willing him to be alive. But Tiho was already gone. His eyes, full of amazement and hurt, just stared back at Folsom in glassy emptiness.

There was no room to maneuver out from under what was now dead weight in the confessional booth. Folsom twisted around and eased Tiho's body down on bench built into the back wall. He could see now that there was blood on the lattice of window in the confessional booth door. Tiho had been stabbed through the latticework.

Someone had followed Tiho here and killed him to prevent him from passing on information to Folsom.

But that wasn't necessarily so, Folsom reasoned. His mind was racing. He was wiping his hands on Tiho's pants, trying to get rid of the blood on his hands. And his mind was racing on what had happened and what was happening and where he should go from here. He wanted this all just not to be happening.

Who was to say that Tiho was the intended victim? Tiho had been in the confessional first and Folsom had followed him in. Anyone on the outside who had seen them go in could easily have assumed that it was Folsom who had his back to the door. The killer would have struck blind. He had no idea who he was stabbing in that confessional. Chances were good that either or both Tiho and Folsom were intended targets.

He had to get out of here. He had to make his way back to the Krebsgasse flat. His hands were as clean as they could get now. He had to leave the confessional and

look in all directions for the assailant while still not sending up the alarm. He had to do something for Tiho, though. He couldn't just leave him here. Of course he couldn't do anything for Tiho. He was a fugitive. If he did anything for Tiho, he'd just be blamed for killing him and that wouldn't get anyone anywhere.

Folsom slowly opened the confessional door and looked for one side to the other. Good. No one was looking at him, or at least it appeared that this was so. He slipped out and walked in a curved approach to the chapel door, trying not to seem either to be in an unusual hurry or to be too direct in his exit. He made it to the chapel door and was in the south aisle, scrutinizing the many people swirling around in the naive. There were several groups listening to tour guides through earphones. He was right next to one, a group of Americans that meandered around him, the bulk of the group between him and the main, west entrance. This gave him the ability to look through the group in that direction without really being seen well from there himself.

When his eyes became focused, he discerned that Fritz the bruiser was standing there, very near to the main entrance. It was obvious that the bruiser was looking for him. He must have followed Folsom. He must have decided that Folsom needed someone watching his back after all. In this he had been prescient.

Folsom waved his hand and started to move toward the front of the nave, seeking the safety of his new buddy.

"Sssstt. No, you don't want to go over there," an insistent voice intruded from behind Folsom's left ear. And Folsom felt a strong hand on his arm, an arm that was pulling him back, toward the front of the nave to the left of the chancel, the sanctuary. Maybe toward sanctuary. Most likely not.

Folsom turned in surprise and fear, taking a defensive stance. The man who had hold of him was a solid, handsome young blond. A regular hunk.

"Who? What?" Folsom was confused, still in a daze over what was happening and how fast it was happening.

"It's me, Ralf. You have to leave here. No, no, you mustn't go to that man. You were being betrayed. Roman was betraying you. That man wants to kill you. Here, come with me. Now. Hurry."

Folsom turned toward Ralf, but as he did so, he thought that the bruiser had caught sight of them and was headed in their direction.

"Come, come. There's another way out. I'll take you to safety. Then I'll explain it all."

Ralf was safety. He hadn't been one of the four. Roman hadn't been either, but maybe Folsom just had been misled by Roman's attention to him on the ship. There was no time to think. Folsom knew nothing about the bruiser. Not really—other than he was an amazing fuck, of course. And if Roman was evil, surely the bruiser was too. Ralf was safe.

Folsom stopped holding back and went with Ralf as they attached themselves to a tour group that was moving to a chapel at the side of the chancel for a short lecture on the oldest known wooden crucifixion still in existence.

"Here, over here," hissed Ralf. "The gift shop. It has an exit to the plaza."

They passed a sign for a WC that pointed down some stone stairs in the south transept. Folsom made an involuntary move in that direction, the washing of his hands of the remnants of Tiho's blood flooding his mind.

"No, no, there's no time for that," Ralf said insistently. "We'll stop somewhere where it's safe and you can wash yourself and I'll tell you of Roman's treachery. Than I'll take you to safety until the police can come."

"The police?" Folsom said with alarm.

"Yes. You're in the clear now. It's all known. But you are in grave danger still.

Come, we must hurry."

Out the gift shop door they went and into the milling crowd in the Dom Platz between the cathedral and the main train station. Ralf hustled Folsom through the teaming station and out onto Sachsenhausen Strasse, and they headed away from the Rhine. After they had been briskly walking for several minutes, Ralf pulled Folsom into a door of a store at the corner of Tunis Strasse and then, just as quickly, through another door onto Tunis, and they were walking briskly parallel to the Rhine, back beyond the cathedral. Within another fifteen-minute walk they were in the Neuemarket Platz, and Ralf at last slowed down and took Folsom into a beergarten that had entrances on three separate blocks and allowed him to go to the men's room and clean himself up as best he could.

When Folsom returned to their table, he saw that Ralf had ordered two large steins of beer, which were just arriving. He also realized for the first time that Ralf was carrying a briefcase with him.

"Here, this will refresh you and calm your nerves," Ralf said, pointing to the glasses of pale ale. "This is Kölsch. It's the best beer Germany has to offer and is, of course, brewed right here in Cologne."

"Tell me what is happening. Why is someone trying to kill me and why aren't the police still looking for me?" Folsom wanted direct answers to direct questions now.

"It's quite straightforward, really," Ralf said. "Roman hated Meister for what he was doing to Dieter and then he was enraged when Meister went too far in sex and accidentally killed Dieter in the ship's exercise room. Roman went to Meister's cabin and took out his revenge in the same manner Meister had killed Dieter. Then Roman decided to make a power grab for Meister's sex enterprises."

"That can't be," Folsom said. "Sten assaulted Roman in his cabin and said he was making such a move for control."

"Sten?" Ralf said and laughed. "Sten, like me, is just a bartender, a lowly employee. Roman confessed that he and Sten staged that to throw you off the track and to win your confidence in him. Roman knew you were an American detective and were stalking Meister. He didn't know for sure what you were up to, but he wanted you neutralized."

"But Sten . . ."

"Sten works for Roman. And they're lovers. Sten is the one you have to look out for. Roman has been arrested and has confessed all. But Sten is on the loose now. I don't know who attacked you back there in the cathedral. It must have been either Sten or Fritz, that club bouncer friend of Roman we sent you to. Roman had me fooled as well. Tiho and I thought he was sending you to safety. I knew nothing until Roman confessed. But, you must be wounded. The blood. Is it bad? Do we need to go to a hospital?"

"Me? Wounded?" Folsom stammered. "No. That was Tiho. Dead. He asked me to meet him in the cathedral. So he could tell me something?"

"Tiho? Dead?" Ralf seemed stunned. "Ah, but that makes sense. Roman had said something about Sten looking for Tiho. They were afraid Tiho was on to them. That must be why he was killed. That detective, Sigmund Frist, said . . ."

"Yes. What about Frist? That's what Tiho was trying to tell me. Something about the captain and Frist and another . . ."

"Ah, so Tiho did manage to tell you something. So, you aren't safe now. If they killed Tiho, they surely will want to kill you too. Come, we'd better go . . ."

"Frist," Folsom said, showing determination not to leave the beergarten until he had some more answers. "Has he been in the captain's cabin all of this time?"

"Apparently yes," Ralf answered. "He was in a difficult spot. He was a detective who had stumbled on to two murders in a place he should not have been. He has a reputation to preserve. Under those circumstances it would make sense that he retreated to the captain's cabin and was doing what he could to help in the investigation, through the captain."

"Oh," Folsom said. "But, then, what was so important about Tiho telling me . . . ?"

"Come, we've stayed in one place—out in the open—for far too long. I know of a friendly hotel near here. We'll go there and I'll contact the police, and we'll get you to safety."

Folsom wasn't finished with questions he wanted to ask, but Ralf was obviously finished with answers he wanted to provide out here in the open on Neuemarket Platz.

He threw down some euros on the table and pulled Folsom out through an entrance that was on a different street than the one they had entered from.

A short walk of a couple of blocks and they were in another small square, and Ralf guided Folsom into a hotel entrance with the name Marsil over the door. Ralf offered another wad of euro notes to a man at the reception desk, evidently enough to keep the man from asking for the requisite passports to be registered. The man handed Ralf and key and they were on their way up the elevator.

In the elevator, Ralf put an arm around Folsom and drew him close and kissed him on the ear. "I've been wanting to get close to this for some time, I'll have to admit," he said in a hoarse whisper. "I think I can find something for us to do while we're waiting for the police escort."

As soon as they entered the room, Ralf pushed Folsom up against the wall next to the door and covered his face and neck with kisses while he unbuttoned his shirt and fanned his palms on Folsom's heaving pecs. He moved his lips down to Folsom's nipples and his hands down Folsom's belly and onto his basket. He was stroking Folsom's prick to life through the material of his pants.

Folsom gasped and pushed Ralf away.

"You want it, I know you do. I can feel it in your body," Ralf was saying in a soft, yet hard-edged voice. "You want me to do you as much as I want to do you."

"Let me shower first," Folsom pleaded. "Let me wash this death off of me first.

Then we'll fuck."

"Fine. I'll call the police while you're showering," Ralf said. "But I'll tell them we won't be here for another hour and a half. They should give us time to become well acquainted."

Folsom moved into the bathroom and turned the shower on full blast and as hot as he could take it. He stripped and stood under the pulsating water for a long time, trying to wash the death of Tiho off him and to come to terms with what was happening in his life. He didn't feel horny, which was a first for him—although he knew he would have no trouble accommodating Ralf and giving Ralf a good time. He just felt empty and dead. Is that what this came down too? He'd come to Germany to kill Meister for murdering his partner and lover, and Meister was dead. Big deal he hadn't been the one to kill him. He'd gotten what he deserved. And Folsom bore no grudges against Roman for having killed Meister. Roman was under no threat from Folsom, and he damn well should know that. All of this manhunting business was unnecessary nonsense—just a meaningless misunderstanding. Life itself was meaningless. It had been meaningless since he had lost Brad Roberts.

At last Folsom left the shower and toweled off and padded out to the bedroom in the nude. Ralf had also stripped down to his shorts and both of them sucked in their breath, thrilled at the sight of the other. Folsom did feel a little horny now. Ralf was a real hunk. He's been very satisfying the first time he had taken Folsom hard and rough, and he was just as desirable now.

"Called the police?" Folsom asked.

"Yes. They should be here in a bit over an hour now. You took your time in the shower."

"But I'm here now."

"Yes, you're here now. And it was worth the wait. Come here. Come to me."

Folsom did as Ralf directed. He liked to be dominated. He was ready to slip into that role. He wanted Ralf to take care of him. To take him hard. To make him forget—if at least only for a few moments of orgiastic death—if that was possible.

Ralf wrapped his arms around Folsom and rubbed skin against skin from pecs to thighs. He kissed Folsom deeply on the lips and then sat him down on the end of the bed, sank to his knees, and began giving Folsom head. Folsom sighed and moaned and ran his hands through Ralf's blond hair for a short while. After a bit, he lay back and spread his legs and tilted his pelvis up to give Ralf ready access to his asshole with his fingers and mouth.

Ralf took advantage of Folsom's gesture, but after giving him some intense attention, alternating between Folsom's tool and his asshole, Ralf stood and pushed Folsom up on the bed. Folsom got the message and moved up until he was stretched full length on the bedspread. Ralf slipped off his briefs and came up onto the bed on his knees, straddling, Folsom's calves. He bent down and took Folsom's prick in his mouth again and sucked and pumped him there, taking time out to lick and pull at Folsom's balls with his teeth.

Folsom was moaning and moving under Ralf, gently stroking up into his soft mouth, reaching release, exploding in a death by ejaculation. How often he had done this with Brad. Folsom was thinking of Brad as his hips jerked for a second time and he released a second spouting of cum. Ralf's finger pushed into Folsom's ass, finding the

prostate, and Folsom died again. Never-ending ejaculation. Getting closer to death, closer to Brad. Heaven.

Maybe closer than he thought.

Chapter 13

A Half-Sought Ending

Ralf took in Folsom's ejaculate in his mouth and, briefly, rose up Folsom's body and merged their lips, sharing the saltiness of Folsom's prodigious manhood. He then moved back down Folsom's torso with his moist lips, kissing his way back to the very center of Folsom, and licked his cock clean.

The two were panting, both keyed up, both wanting more. Ralf moved his encasing knees farther up Folsom's body again now, wrapping their cocks together with an encasing fist and stroking them together as he worked Folsom's nipples with his lips and teeth. Folsom murmured his approval and flung his arms around Ralf's head and held him close.

This wasn't the same Ralf who had ravished him earlier, the one who had bulled his way into Folsom's cabin and thrust inside him and pumped him hard with no preparation. Folsom liked both versions of Ralf. This is what Brad had done for him too—gauged his mood and been either lover or rapist as Folsom signaled he wanted at the moment.

Ralf was sitting saddled on Folsom's chest now, handling his rising cock with his hand. Stroking Folsom's neck and chin and cheeks and lips with his cock. And then laying his mushroom cap on Folsom's closed lips. Folsom opened his mouth to Ralf's nicely hung manhood, and Ralf slowly entered him and tested all angles of the warm cavern being offered to him. Folsom's eyes were closed. He was savoring the gentle, yet insistence approach. Ralf rotated his hips, hitting all of the inner walls with his mushroom cap and then slowly, slowly, yet relentlessly, he started to pump Folsom's

inner spaces with his engorging cock. Stronger and deeper and ever more rapidly he pumped. Folsom had no trouble accommodating him and matching his rhythm, at least at the beginning. But then Ralf had Folsom's head in his hand and he was face fucking him with more intensity. Folsom started to gag, but he was loving this. He loved being dominated and forced to the edges of endurance.

He opened his eyes. And then the shock set in. Sudden realization. Anger and terror hitting him at the same instant. He bit down hard and the blond hunk yelped and jerked his cock out of Folsom's mouth. Folsom bucked his body up, lurching away from the other man, trying to escape him. But his assailant was quick to recover. He kneed Folsom in the lower belly, knocking the wind out of him and socked him hard in the jaw, stunning and immobilizing the American long enough for him to reach his briefcase and take out leather thongs and tie Folsom's wrists off at the headboard.

When he had opened his eyes, Folsom had seen that there was no scorpion tattoo on the man's groin. This wasn't Ralf. This was Sten.

Sten gave him a wicked smile as he extracted a mouth plug and popped it into Folsom's mouth, the American still stunned by the body and cheek blows. He then tied the plug off. Folsom wouldn't be doing any talking or yelling.

After that, he took a condom out of his briefcase and rolled it on his engorged cock. He moved to between Folsom's legs, spread them wide, thrust inside the American detective's ass, and fucked him hard to a finish.

The fucking went on endlessly, and Folsom began to take hope that the police would show up before Sten could do him any real harm. But then he realized. Sten hadn't called the police at all. And Roman probably hadn't confessed to anything. And

the police were probably still searching for Folsom as a suspect in the murders of Meister and Dieter—and now probably Tiho as well.

Sten arched his back and his muscles tensed and he gave a little cry as he unloaded inside the condom inside Folsom. Folsom gave a little prayer that this condom was as weak as the one Meister had used on Brad and that this at least would leave DNA that could be traced back to Sten.

Sten was off the bed now and fumbling around in his briefcase. He came up with a rectangular box, from which he extracted several sounding wands.

Folsom strained at the bonds on his arms and flailed his legs.

But Sten just laughed. "You know what will happen if you don't hold perfectly still for this, don't you? These tubes will tear your cock apart from the inside. If that's what you want, keep throwing those legs around. If not, you'll want to hold very, very still."

Folsom went very still, and Sten sat down on the end of the bed, Folsom's left leg stretching behind his buttocks and his right leg spread wide.

Folsom tensed and began to sweat as the first, small wand was poised at his piss slit and then slowly, ever so slowly, worked in and up his urethra channel. Folsom gurgled in surprise at the invasion. It didn't feel half bad, although he made him want to piss. Sten swirled the wand slowly inside the passage and Folsom arched his back. He wanted to move his body, to writhe away from the wand, but he had to be careful to keep his pelvis perfectly still.

Sten slowly pulled the wand out and Folsom sighed in relief. But only momentarily, because Sten had a larger wand in his hand and was pushing it into

Folsom's piss slit. Folsom growled his indignation, wanting to scream instead. Sten laughed and started to move the wand in and out, fucking Folsom's cock.

This was too much for Folsom. When Sten pulled the wand out of Folsom's cock, Folsom shot his seed strongly and profusely.

This turned Sten on and he was pulling on his cock. he stood and sheathed his cock with another condom and then pulled Folsom's butt to the edge of the bed and thrust inside him again. Folsom grunted. Then he began to whimper as Sten pulled a thick wand out of the rectangular box and, after burying his cock to the root inside Folsom, began to run the tube deep into Folsom's cock. Folsom realized that this, exactly, was how Brad, Meister, and Dieter had been found, and he had no illusions about what Sten had planned for him.

When Sten had finished fucking Folsom a second time, he withdrew, leaving the thick sounding wand buried and reached into his bag of tricks again. This time he came out with more leather thongs and tied Folsom's ankles off to the corners of the bed at the footboard. Another dive into the bag and out came an incredible thick and long dildo.

He was feeding this slowly into Folsom's ass, and Folsom couldn't help himself this time; he was writhing and bucking his body against the mammoth object moving up inside him. He knew he was just moments from being torn apart.

Sten stopped with this torture, however, and went back to his briefcase. This time he took out a nasty-looking hunting knife. There was blood on the blade. No doubt Tiho's blood.

Sten laid the knife on the bed between Folsom's legs and went back to rotating and pushing on the giant dildo.

Folsom felt himself slipping away. The fuck was extraordinary, and, except for the probability that Sten would get away scot-free, Folsom felt he was ready to go. He was going delirious, seeing and feeling himself floating on a wave of never-ending ejaculation. So this was what death was about. In the distance between the clouds, he thought he could see figures. He willed them to come closer. He willed for one of them to be Brad, for Brad to be beckoning to him, to be inviting him to cross over. The figures held off, though, hovering at the near distance. Folsom was moaning deeply, his own moaning coming back at him as if in an echo chamber. The dildo was pushing, rotating relentlessly, filling, stretching, to and beyond his limits. . . . Sunlight flashing on the blade of a knife, now held over Folsom's quivering belly, moving to the point of release.

. . .

Chapter 14

A Beginning Disguised as an Ending

Folsom gave a muffled scream of terror and pain as the knife struck him. It, surprisingly, was only a glancing slice across his naked thigh. But trussed up as he was, spread-eagled naked and bound on the bed with sexual devices possessing every orifice, he was completely at the mercy of whatever game Sten was playing. He steeled himself for the next slice of the knife, dreading where that might be, keeping his eyes tightly shut as the last defense available to him.

But the final blow did not come, and he heard a yelp and a gurgling noise and opened his eyes as Sten fell on top of him, their eyes now glued on each other's, and Sten's registering as much surprise and pain as Folsom felt.

And then the leather thongs binding Folsom's wrists and ankles to the bed were being sliced away and Fritz, the bruiser, was helping to push Sten's gasping body off of Folsom and also, as delicately as possible, relieving Folsom of the beleaguering sounding wand and oversized dildo.

"What? How?" Folsom sputtered as the plug gag came out of his mouth.

"I saw Sten entice you out of the cathedral," the German club bouncer said.

"So you followed me even when I told you not to," Folsom said, still in shock and not thinking on all cylinders. If the German hadn't followed him, the German couldn't have saved him from a painful death.

"Roman told me to take care of you, and I know Sten well. I knew you were in serious trouble and didn't seem to know it. I lost you in the Dom Platz, but we have a network here, men like you and me, and I eventually connected with the desk clerk at

this hotel, who identified you both from the description I gave him. Sorry it took so long—almost too long."

"Yes, yes, Thanks for coming to the rescue."

Sten was gurgling ominously on the bed beside Folsom. It was clear he didn't have long to live. His death stab at Folsom had been deflected when the bruiser broke in and hurled himself at the bed. But then the knife had done its work on Sten.

Folsom turned to him and brought his head very close to Sten's. The misguided bartender's eyes were beginning to glaze over, and he was grimacing and panting from the pain in his gut. Folsom started to talk to him in soothing tones, not really to comfort him all that much but to both make sure he wasn't a threat anymore and to squeeze whatever information he could get out of the man. Folsom's instincts as a police detective were winning through his own pain, pain that had been inflicted by this man he was now cajoling.

"Who did them, Sten? who killed Meister and Dieter?" Folsom hadn't forgotten Tiho, of course, but it was almost self-evident now that Sten himself had killed Tiho.

Sten was trying to say something. Folsom put his ear close to Sten's mouth and was able to hear the name he needed. And then Sten was gone.

"You should go clean yourself up," the bruiser was saying. "I'll call the cops, but it's up to you whether we stay here and wait for them."

"Roman." It suddenly hit Folsom. If Tiho had been killed for what he knew,
Roman was either equally a target or was already dead. Where was Ralf now, Folsom
wondered. Regardless, he had to made an attempt to help Roman if he could. He knew

he could count on the bruiser to back him up on this and get him back to the ship the fastest way possible.

Miracles of miracles. The bruiser had somehow come up with a motorcycle to aid his search for Folsom and it was sitting right outside the hotel door on Marsil Platz. A quick zip down Muhlenbach to the road paralleling the Rhine and they were at the ship within eight minutes. The guards the police had stationed on the dock and at the entrance to the ship just stood and gawked with dropped jaws as the man they were searching for on the ship was storming the ship from the dock with a gigantic bodyguard of his own in his wake.

Folsom asked the guy on duty at reception where the captain's cabin was, and then the bruiser asked him more pointedly and far more effectively, and the conga line was off to the races—Folsom followed closely by the bouncer, who was bouncing off the walls of the narrow corridor and keeping the tagline of policemen from reaching Folsom. The desk clerk was far in the rear but making every effort to get there in time to enjoy the fireworks.

Folsom and the bruiser burst into the captain's cabin just in time to save Roman.

He was trussed up on the bed in what had now become a familiar sacrifice stance just as his assailant was about to deliver the coup de grace.

The bruiser hit the ship's captain in the midsection and sent him careening to one wall, while Folsom bounced Roman's attacker against another wall. They went down in a heap and it was touch and go for a moment or two, but Folsom's determination and thirst for vengeance was ascendant and, when the knife had struck home, and Folsom's

opponent had gone quiet and gurgled his last breath, all of the pain and frustration Folsom had gone through since Brad Roberts had died was also laid to rest.

A wheezing Inspector Manfeld, accompanied by an even more official-looking police detective, arrived at the cabin door at that precise moment. Their eyes swept in tandem from Roman's naked, spread-eagled, and tortured body on the bed to the captain hunched in one corner, nursing a bleeding nose and being watch like a hawk by a monster of man and then to where Folsom was sitting next to the body of Roman's assailant. Their mouths were working but no sound was coming out. Until this very moment, they did not know and would not believe that Sigmund Frist had been here, under their noses, hiding out in the captain's cabin all of this time.

Frist was beyond interrogation now, but it didn't take the ship's captain long to cut the best deal he could by telling the police—who now accepted Folsom as one of their own—all that he knew.

Folsom already knew some it what the captain was going to say. His checking of the names he gotten off the crew list against U.S. immigration records with the help of the NYPD researcher Trudi had revealed that the ship's captain and Sten had accompanied Meister to the United States, arriving in New York, and were in the States when Brad Roberts was murdered. The e-mail exchange with Trudi had also revealed, however, that Sigmund Frist was in New York at the same time. Folsom would not have been satisfied about who had actually killed his partner and lover, Brad, if the captain had not spun out the story, although even then he'd never be positive.

The captain and Sten had arrived at the scene of Roberts's murder after he had died—or so the captain claimed. It was the captain's understanding that Meister had

fucked Brad—and that much had already been verified by the DNA—but that Frist had done the knifing that had killed him. Frist and Meister had been equal partners in Meister's sex enterprise schemes; Frist had ensured that Meister could conduct his activities in Germany through his influence in the police department.

But Meister had gotten greedy and was blackmailing Frist, whose activities and proclivities were being kept a secret from his police system. That's why Meister had to die as well. Dieter had been killed first; Frist had come upon Meister fucking Dieter in his favorite way in the ship's exercise room. Frist had joined in the fun and had killed Dieter as part of that fun. Than, an unknowing Meister had been taken to his own death in his cabin by Frist.

After that, Frist had tried to implicate Folsom in the murders, knowing that Folsom had come to revenge his partner's death and thus was highly vulnerable to being fingered for Meister's death. Folsom himself was able to figure out that Frist had drugged him before bedding him and gone off to murder Meister while Folsom would think they were still together and were engaging in all-night sex. Folsom's dream of handling a dildo during their sex was a half-conscious awareness that Frist was getting his fingerprints on one of the weapons. And Frist had access to all of the cabin keys on the ship and had planted the knife in Folsom's cabin when Folsom had encountered him there the day following the murder.

The captain claimed, of course, that both he and Sten were just willing and enabling employees caught up in a web of threats and bullying to do what Meister and Frist wanted them to do—and there was no one else alive now to totally belie his claim.

The next day, the police gave clearances for the ship to sail again to meet its schedule for arrival in Amsterdam, albeit with a skeleton crew made up of the lucky survivors of the recent days' mayhem. The police offered Folsom a hotel stay in Cologne until all of the paperwork was finished—and the bruiser begged him to stay with him instead.

But Folsom wanted to recover in his own way. He asked permission to sail on to Amsterdam and to return to Cologne—and, yes, to the bruiser's bed and shower and sofa—it was melting just to think of the good times he'd be having with the bruiser—a few days later by air.

As the ship pulled away from the dock and Folsom waved to Manfeld and company and the somewhat disappointed bruiser, he turned and headed for the Alexander Lounge. Half way there, though, he was accosted by the African potentate, wanting to claim his rain check on their romp on the Helios deck lounger, and Folsom thought, what the hell, and permitted himself to be carried off to the king's cabin.

The African took him in the tiny shower from the rear against the tiles, lifting Folsom's body up from the floor with the thrusts of his insistent cock, and then again in the middle of the cabin, with the ebony giant standing on his feet, in a semicrouch, and Folsom suspended in air, legs jutting out on either side of the African's hips and the king pumping Folsom's pelvis up and down on his glistening sledgehammer. And finally, with the African flat on his back on the bed and grinning up at Folsom as the American straddled his pelvis and did a long, vigorous pole dance on his engorged cock.

Later that night, as the ship was nudging into the suburbs of Amsterdam on the Amstel canal, Folsom and Ralf finally met up and went back to Folsom's cabin, where Ralf fucked him three ways from Sunday in relentless, deep-assed thrustings on the table, the floor, and the bed, tossing used condoms left and right all night.

It was at the height of this debauchery that Folsom realized that it wasn't the orgiastic death that he sought and now was receiving in perpetual ejaculations. It wasn't an ending of anything; it was a beginning. Ejaculation gave life, not death. He would never forget Brad Roberts and what they had together, but Folsom no longer sought to mourn by seeking death through sex; he could now fully rejoice in life through sex.

He wondered how hard it would be for Ralf to get a Green Card for U.S. residency. Maybe with his help, if Ralf was interested.

Chapter 15

It Ain't Over Until It's Over

Folsom awoke to Ralf's sex-satiated, very satisfied snoring. They were both on their sides in one of the beds in Folsom's cabin on the MS River God, the American's well-worked butt nestled into the Australian's well-exercised groin and his strong arms encircling Folsom. The palm of one of Ralf's hands was spread on Folsom's lower belly, and the American detective had not been this content and well-fucked since he was living with Brad Roberts, his partner at the NYPD—and his lover—whose murder had propelled Folsom to Europe in search of revenge over his killer.

Folsom felt at peace this morning. Both the murderer he had pursued and the murderer he had found were dead now. And his own outlook on the relationship between death and life had changed in the brief time since Ralf had taken him to bed last night and fucked him endlessly, at first wildly on every surface in the cabin and then tenderly, but never as roughly as he had the first time he had taken Folsom. Before they slept, Ralf said he would show Folsom some rough fucking this morning, some variation of it that they hadn't done before. And now Folsom was looking forward to it—because now he didn't think of being fucked to ejaculation as a form of death; he thought of it as a form of rebirth into life. He wanted Ralf to fuck him fully back into life.

Both of the young hunks were startled very much awake by the ringing of the telephone. Folsom answered it, and as he did so, he disentangled from Ralf and sat up on the edge of the bed. Folsom opened the curtain and saw that the ship was docked in Amstersdam, very near to the main railroad station. The two lovers had missed the dawn, but not by much. It had been raining, and a sea of bicycles, workers on their way

to their offices, was sweeping by gracefully on the main road and circle in front of the station.

Folsom was groggy, but the voice on the other end of the line brought him completely awake.

"Have you seen him? Has he returned?" Inspector Manfeld sounded quite concerned.

"He who?" Folsom answered dumbly.

"The ships captain. He escaped us in Cologne. We didn't put enough of a guard on him at the police station before he was booked. He just vanished. We're afraid he's headed back to where you are. To Amsterdam. To the ship."

"No," the American continued with his not-quite-awake dumb act. "I haven't left my cabin yet this morning. But I'll go see . . ."

Ralf was sitting up behind the American now, his thighs encasing Folsom's, his hands all over Folsom's body, pinching and squeezing him here and there. Folsom felt that promised rougher fuck coming. He tried to pry Ralf's hand from its squeezing hold on his nuts, but he wouldn't let go. He had his teeth in the hollow of his prey's neck.

"We'll be there as soon as we can get the helicopter up," Manfeld was saying.

"Just hold on until we get there."

That was going to be hard to do, Folsom thought, as he dropped the telephone receiver back into its cradle and sent his now-free hand into battle with Ralf hands. But it was a losing battle. Ralf was much stronger and more determined than his prey was.

"No, Ralf. The ship's captain has escaped in Cologne and may be on his way back here. We must . . ."

"We must finish what we were doing first," Ralf said with a throaty voice. And he wrapped an arm around his victim's midsection and raised him up and set him back down on his now-hard tool, working his way deeply into Folsom's channel, as the American thrashed about and groaned and grunted and moaned. Ralf pulled the joined couple back over onto their sides and thrust hard and rapidly in and out in Folsom's ass with his cock as he clawed the American's chest and belly with his fingernails and thrust Folsom's leg up in the air with his strong calf.

He was gnawing quite vigorously on Folsom's neck with his teeth and the American arched his back, pushing his shoulders into Ralf's bulging pecs in an attempt to writhe away from him. This was a mistake, however. One of Ralf's hands went up so that the heel of the hand was blocking Folsom's mouth and he was pinching the American's nose closed with a finger and thumb.

Folsom was thrashing about, but Ralf was just too strong. The American was gasping for air, as Ralf put his mouth very close to Folsom's ear.

"This is the special fuck I promised you last night," he whispered. Folsom could hear the lust dripping in Ralf's voice. "This is very popular here in Amsterdam. Did you know that the sweetest enjoyment of ejaculation is a sort of a death, when you are at the point of dying? Like when you can't live without the next breath but you can't breathe?"

Yes I knew that, Folsom wanted to scream. But he also wanted to yell that he was past that. He didn't want to die in ejaculation anymore; He wanted to live in ejaculation. But, of course Ralf couldn't hear his victim, because Folsom couldn't really scream anything. It was all he could do to try to search for air.

Ralf's pounding cock was hitting Folsom's prostate hard, and just as the Australian stud flooded the American hunk's insides with his cum, he squeezed Folsom's balls hard and the American shot off as well. This also was the moment Folsom blacked out from the lack of oxygen.

When Folsom awoke, he was alone. The droning of the police sirens no doubt were what had brought him around. He painfully sat up in the bed and pushed the curtains back. There were several police cars parked at the ramp up to the ship's entrance. He had no idea whether Manfeld and his people had arrived or whether he had called in an advance contingent from the Amsterdam police. The cars were empty, but their sirens were still blaring.

Folsom heard pandemonium in the corridor outside, and, as soon as he could get his shit together and throw on a pair of trousers and a T-shirt, he joined the chaos.

All of the attention was on the lower level, with all feet headed for the captain's cabin.

He was already dead when Folsom got there, lying in front of an open wall safe, a knife dug in up to its hilt in his back.

The policemen now on the scene were Dutch. Manfeld and his crew were nowhere in sight. He must have prepared the Dutch police though, because they quickly accepted who Folsom was and that he was to be privy to the investigation.

Seeing the captain lying there in his own blood, not just stabbed, but his body sliced here and there with the knife blade, brought the scene of Brad Roberts's murder back to Folsom full blown. It surfaced details of that scene he had pushed back into the interior of his mind, that he hadn't allowed myself to think about. Brad's body had been

sliced as well. Not deeply, just shallow cuts. Almost ritualistically, primitively. And what was that Brad had told his partner about the case the night before he had died? What had Brad told Folsom that the two of them should do?

On impulse, Folsom bent down to the body. Something was clutched in the captain's dead fist. With the permission of the Dutch detective, the American pried the fist open. Just a scrap a paper, a torn edge of a document of some kind, something to do with the ship.

Not much to go on, but the captain had returned for whatever this scrap was attached to, and he had died because he had returned for it.

Folsom stood up and told the detective he had to go see about something immediately, that he had to call his researcher at the NYPD, Trudi, and pursue the question that Brad Roberts had wanted him and to check out. Suddenly the answer to that question was very important. And Folsom told the Dutch detective what he needed to check out.

Folsom was heading down the corridor toward the reception desk and the only computer on the ship linked to the Internet, when he was accosted in the corridor by a hulking figure.

"I would very much like to resume that fucking we were so nicely doing yesterday afternoon," the African potentate was saying in a clipped, very British voice.

"I just have to check on something first," Folsom said, a little irritated that the African stud was after him before Folsom was ready for him. But he just stood there, filling the corridor between Folsom and the reception room with his black beefcake figure.

"I think now is fine," he said with a big grin. And he had his arms around Folsom and he was squeezing him, and, in particular his fat fingers were squeezing vital arteries in Folsom's neck, and the American blacked out for the second time that morning.

Folsom found himself on a bed covered with the hides of exotic creatures. And his arms and legs were spread-eagled and tied to the corners of the bed. And the naked African king, his body glistening with sweat and radiating power and force, was dancing around below him, a large dildo in one hand and a pearl-handled hunting knife in the other, both of which were covered in blood. Young men, a couple of the waiters from the boat, Folsom realized, were standing beside the bed and moving the air with large palm fronds. And the ebony giant was chanting and laughing. Folsom's ass was being massively entered, and a thick tube, whether the dildo or the African's cock, Folsom knew not, was invading him ever deeper. And he was screaming and gasping and bucking against and with the invader. The African was huddled over him, leering down at him, the knife was poised over Folsom's breast.

Folsom realized, with horror that he had been here before, in a dream. But this was no dream. He also thought, rather idiotically, that he should be paying more attention to his dreams.

But then Folsom realized it wasn't large palm fronds the two members of the ship's crew were holding onto; it was two ends of ropes in some sort of pulley system. And Folsom's wrists were somehow attached to this system, and the two young crew members pulled on the ropes at the mad African's gesture, and Folsom's torso was being raised, his arms being raised up in a wide stance. He was hanging from a bar overhead.

The African was chanting something almost ritualistic as he danced around the bed on which the animal pelts were spread. With two swishes of the nasty-looking knife he had in his hand, he cut the bounds that had Folsom's ankles attached to the corner posts, and Folsom's leg's were free.

But only for a moment. The African potentate bounded up on the bed, danced around Folsom momentarily, and then was behind him, thrusting his huge cock inside Folsom's ass. The two crew members came in close beside the bed on each side and each grabbed one of Folsom's ankles and wishboned them to the side.

The African was crouched between Folsom's raised legs and was fucking strongly up into his ass. His was swishing the knife around in front of Folsom, and Folsom gave a surprised scream and then a gasp as, in two swishing strokes, the knife had sliced very shallow cuts across his chest and on one of his thighs.

The African savagely pulled Folsom's head back with his free fist in the American's hair and whispered in his ear, "Not quite the way I did your lover, Brad Roberts, but maybe I'll finish you the way I intended to finish him—and the way I would have if he hadn't lurched unfortunately and run into the knife."

Folsom was terrified, but he didn't respond to the African hulk's admission.

However, Folsom now knew who had murdered Brad.

The blade of the knife gleamed in front of Folsom's eyes, catching the light of the overhead fixture.

"Ever fantasized about being fucked to death with the blade of a sharp hunting knife?" The African hissed into Folsom's ear. "We do that back in Tuliewanna. That's a

very special execution we have for worthy opponents. Are you feeling worthy, Mr. Folsom?"

A swish across a bicep, and Folsom cried out in pain.

"The captain? Why the captain?" Folsom managed, trying to get the African concentrating on something else other than carving him up.

"You needn't ask that," The African whispered menacingly in his ear. "You figured that out. I heard what you said to the Dutch policeman in the captain's cabin. You asked him to check out what country this ship was registered in. Tuliewanna, of course.

Landlocked Tuliewanna. Flag of convenience and all that."

Swish across a buttock and Folsom stifled another scream. The African pulled his cock completely out and then slammed it home again, and for that Folsom did groan loudly.

"Just one step from there and you'd have figured out that I own this operation, that all of the rest front for me, Frist, Meister, the captain, the whole lot of them. The captain came back for insurance, for the ship's registration papers, so he could hold that over my head. He had covered for me in his testimony that Frist killed your Brad Roberts. But he thought he could have something to hold over my head so that I didn't just kill him then. He was wrong, naturally."

The African had the blade under Folsom's chin now, and Folsom could feel the dribbling of blood more than any pain from the slight cut there.

And then he caught something out of the corner of his eye. Some movement over by the cabin's door. And then Ralf was bounding in the room and moving quickly toward the bed.

Folsom's immediate thought was that he was afraid that if Ralf attacked the African directly, the blade of the knife might slip—with very unfortunate consequences for Folsom. But his next thoughts were very confused. Ralf bounded onto the bed, but he wasn't attacking the African, he was grinning from ear to ear. And he and the African were kissing deeply over Folsom's shoulder. And then Ralf was holding Folsom's thighs in his strong hands and he was crouching in front of and below Folsom, sandwiching the American between him and the African.

And Folsom felt a second cock at his asshole. Pushing in beside that of the African. An impossible feat, but one that he somehow was accomplishing. Folsom was howling in pain and surprise, but he was being deeply skewered by two fat cocks despite his objections. And they started fucking him vigorously in unison, as he arched his back and turned his head to the ceiling, looking for relief from any quarter that would offer it. And he was moaning and groaning. And panting and pleading. But he was taking it, and it was sending him to the moon. Right up until he blacked out for the third time that day.

This time Folsom awoke in the arms of Fritz the bruiser, his favorite fuck friend from Cologne, well after the good guys had arrived and broken up the fun of the African and Ralf. Fritz had helicoptered in with Manfeld. Fritz had saved Folsom at the last minute so many times now that Folsom decided to go back to Cologne under his protection and in his embrace until the German and Dutch police could sort out just how many layers of control and intrigue were involved in this MS River God operation.

As far as Folsom cared, with a thought to how well the bruiser had topped him, they could take their jolly sweet time in sorting it out.

Chapter 16

The Fat Lady Sings

Fritz and Clint Folsom were sitting on a banquette, teasing each other through the folds and openings of their clothes in the dimly lit club and listening to the fat lady sing. This wasn't the Cologne leather club, Chains, where Fritz was the bouncer, though. As a reward for saving him twice from being fucked to death during that Rhine River cruise, Folsom had brought Fritz home with him for a week on the town in the Big Apple. The German had been like a little puppy dog—well, a St. Bernard, really—a St. Bernard in heat. He'd polished Folsom's apples repeatedly since they'd returned to Clint's New York apartment. And he practically had Folsom undressed and swinging on his prodigious dong right here in Francine's, where the American had brought him to try to get some relief from nonstop screwing in the sack.

Francine was the fat lady singing on stage. Francine and Folsom went way back to her early days, when she had to keep this club a secret. Now she was the toast of the Village. No one messed with Francine anymore.

One of Clint's favorite waiters wafted by in a tight little cocktail dress, blew the police detective a kiss on his way to another table and gave him that "just a minute, I'll be right back, Hon," wave that he did. Folsom liked Reggie. He had a dick long enough to reach your tonsils, and the two sometimes went off into one of the club's back rooms on nights he wasn't too busy and the detective was bummed out from a particularly nasty homicide, and the sassy waiter would swab Folsom's tonsils for him from the inside and make him forget about the job entirely.

"So, who's the hunk, sweetie?" he rasped at Folsom in his Bette Davis voice when he came back by the table.

Clint introduced him to Fritz, relieved at the release of pressure on his package, as Fritz offered a hand to Reggie and Reggie took her sweet time returning it.

"Francine's in rare form tonight," Folsom said to Reggie, as Reggie stared into Fritz's blue eyes and did very suggestive things with the German's beefy thumb. While Fritz and Reggie were exchanging meaningful looks, the detective took a look down on the stage. He'd seen this act of Francine's before. She did it frequently. She came out decked out in bolts of shiny satin material and big pearls and sang her best Aretha Franklin impersonation, while two comely young men slowly unwound the material until she was down to just the pearls around her neck, two gigantic pearls hanging between her thighs and big black dick to take your breath away—and her act ended with "her" doing both of the young men right there on stage at great length and with astonishing variety. All the time flashing the face of a beautiful woman and the cock of a horse. She was only half unraveled and two thirds of the way through "Respect" when Folsom gave her his attention this evening.

"You've been gone, Clint, my pet," Reggie murmured through pouty lips, "Or you would have known that Francine's retired from the stage part. She's only performing tonight because that bitch, Clarice, didn't show up for her two spots. Francine's doing this one and will repeat it later."

"Why's she stopped performing?" Clint asked. "She's still in magnificent shape." "She's in mourning. Eddie and she have split. She says she can barely get it up

anymore, let alone trot it out." Reggie leaned down into Fritz's face with her own and

gave him a big, sloppy kiss while Folsom absorbed this information of the breakup. She moved the German's hand to the mound of her cocktail dress, letting Fritz know what was on offer.

Folsom had always thought that Francine and Eddie were a mismatched pair—but he'd also always thought they'd be together until one or both of them got killed from indulging in their nefarious activities. Francine was a gigantic black queen given to opulence and sweeping gestures, and Eddie was an undersized—but well-decked out—blond street punk who would forever look like a twink and would steal your balls and have them pawned in ten minutes flat if you didn't hang onto them when he was in the room. Together, they both had barely stayed on the unjailed edge of the law and just a few steps ahead of the competing neighborhood gangs for years. But as badly matched as they looked, Folsom always thought they were devoted to each other, that they'd kill for each other if they had to.

Fritz brought Folsom back out of his thoughts by pawing him roughly and intimately and trying to pull the American up on his lap between the banquette and the table. Reggie was gone now, but the waiter had revved up Fritz's engine and Clint was the one who was at hand—and well covered with hands.

Folsom liked being pawed by Fritz, though, The German had those bouncer hands all over Clint while he inhaled the American's lips with his. He had Folsom's pants down close to his knees, and a big palm under his butt with a forefinger buried someplace Clint found real interesting. And he was lifting Folsom up and over toward his lap when the couple felt the presence of someone else standing by the table.

"So, you decided to start without me?"

Fritz and Clint both looked up, and both smiled sheepishly. The missing corner of the trio that had arrived here this evening had returned to the table. Ralf. Folsom's beautiful blond Australian hunk from the Rhine River cruise.

"Yah, yah," Fritz responded good-naturedly. "You vere gone so lange, ve had given up on you."

"It's a long way to the men's room," Ralf replied with a laugh. "Past some very interesting rooms and some pretty inviting tail."

"So, I guess you're just too tired now and ready to go back to your hotel," Folsom said, teasing him.

"Not a chance, Clint," he shot back. "You promised me a good time when my cruise ship returned to port, and I'm calling you on it. Besides, you still owe me for the mistaken identity."

Folsom conceded that Ralf was right. Clint had completely misjudged—actually, misidentified Ralf—back on the MS River God when that African potentate had almost finished the American detective off. Of course it was Ralf's own fault. He hadn't bothered to tell Folsom that the third of the trio of bartenders on that cruise, Pieter, was a spitting image of Ralf himself, down to similar tattoos high on their thighs. Ralf's was a scorpion and Pieter's a crab. It hadn't been a coincidence that they were almost identical and were both bartenders on the River God cruises. They had originally joined the cruise company as a "twin" sex act, but they hadn't seen eye to eye on how slavishly to follow the lead of the men controlling the operation and had parted ways as an act. Ralf had kept some control over what he would do for the operation, while Pieter, along with the other bartender, Sven, had sold out entirely to the company. It had

been Pieter, not Ralf, who had attacked and doubled Folsom with the African chief—and who had no trouble seeing the nosy American detective killed in the effort.

Folsom had done what he could for Ralf when he discovered Ralf hadn't turned on him. Ralf, of course, couldn't work on the MS River God anymore. So, Folsom helped get him a bartender position on the Talbot cruise lines, headquartered here in New York and cruising mainly in the South Seas. But Ralf was in port now, and for this reason, as much as any other, the three friends, made that way from shared danger, were out on the town.

With a sigh, Fritz suspended his efforts to get Clint onto his lap, and the American sank down into the banquette beside the German. Ralf slid in behind the table and very close beside Clint on the other side. They both had arms around Clint's neck and hands working in tandem in his lap, and Folsom turned from one to the other to receive kisses from two very aggressive, insistent lovers. Their breath was hot on his neck, their hands were everywhere—he had no idea that four hands could be in some many places at one time—and they were hot and heating up.

"What?" Folsom asked. Ralf was whispering something in his ear, but he was speaking in such low tones and the music was so loud down on stage, marking the arrival of Francine's special delight weapon, that Clint hadn't heard what he'd said.

"Fritz and I have been talking," he repeated. "We want to do you."

"No secret there—or problem," Clint said with a laugh. "You and Fritz have been doing me for weeks."

"I mean together. Both of us, together."

"You're both doing me together right now," Clint said. What was it that Ralf meant, what he was trying to say without directly saying it, he wondered.

"No, I mean do you, both of us. Together. You know, together. We saw you being done that way and we know you can take it. You were hot doing it. Together."

Oh.

Folsom looked down on the stage. Francine already had one of the young guys mounted on her tool and she was just spinning him around and he was flopping back and forth, giving the bug-eyed audience a good show of being split in two. It was very convincing. It was very hot. Folsom was being aroused. Folsom was just about up for what Ralf and Fritz were asking.

"Well, maybe later," he said. "We can go back to my apartment. And then we'll see . . ."

"Here," Fritz wheezed into one ear.

"Now," Ralf breathed into the other ear.

"Right here and now?" Folsom asked, his jaw going slack. "Won't Francine be pissed? The floor show is supposed to be down there, not up here."

"I talked to her backstage, before she came on," Ralf said. "She said we could use her dressing room. She'll be a while. She hasn't exhausted the first guy yet, and the second one looks like he has more stamina. And she says she won't be back in the dressing room until after her second performance. We have a couple of hours."

Fritz was already fingering inside Folsom's ass with a big fat finger and Ralf was fisting his cock, so he wasn't being given a whole lot of decision room here.

But at that moment, when Folsom was about to accede, he froze in place.

Hernando Ramierez had just entered the club. The 220-pound, 6 foot 4, hunk of sultry Latin manhood going by the name of Hernando Ramierez, Flash to his friends, was here in the club. The new guy in Folsom's NYPD division, Flash, who hadn't been assigned to a specialty yet, but who wanted to be assigned to homicide, where Folsom worked, just as Folsom wanted him to be assigned to homicide. Folsom had had his suspicions about how Ramierez hung, and here he was in a transvestite club. Folsom didn't know whether to hide under the table and let Fritz and Ralf make love to each other above him, hiding him from view, or to invite Flash to come over and lay on the table and let all three of them feast on him.

Flash solved the dilemma himself by spying Folsom out and coming directly over and giving him a big, unconcerned smile and greeting him directly. So, Folsom guessed there was no question in Ramierez's mind which why Folsom swung—and it didn't seem to bother him. Good signs both. Very good signs.

"Hi, Clint," he chirped and just stood there between the action on the stage and the suspended action in the trio's banquette. "Hi, guys," he directed at Fritz and Ralf as well. They both perked up, instantly recognizing that another member of the all-stud team was in attendance. four really hot studs, for there was no doubt at all that Clint Folsom and friends were real hot studs.

"Uh, hi, Hernan— Flash," Clint said. "What brings you here?" How lame was that to ask, he immediately recognized. "Uh, what . . ."

"I'm here on business," Flash said. "But relax. I have no problem being here. And I certainly have no problem with you being here. The club owner, Frank somebody, has been receiving death threats, and I've been sent over to check it out. Still don't have my

NYPD specialty assignment, so I'm getting all of the calls they can't pigeonhole easily. I'll have to find this Frank and . . ."

"That's Frank down there on stage," Folsom said, not entirely successfully covering a smile. "Here she's know as Francine, though." At that moment Francine was playing gardener. She had her young man, still the first one, splayed out in front of her, holding his weight on his hands, palms down on the floor, and his legs spread up, back, and out, Francine holding him like a wheelbarrow and planting seed in his ass with her trowel.

"Oh," Flash said and sat down on the banquette beside Ralf, a little confused still.

All Folsom could think of at the moment was Eddie. He was such a hothead, Clint was thinking. He'd gotten himself in a heap of trouble now, though. He must have mouthed around, in his tiff with Francine, that he was going to do Francine in, which was just like the flamboyant little bugger. And now that had gotten back to the police, who had been expecting the gangs to put out a contract on Francine for years. They didn't care what happened to Francine all that much, but everything was in a tenuous balance down here in the Village. Something like Francine getting rubbed out could light the whole neighborhood like a bonfire.

"We were just going to take Clint back to Francine's dressing room and fuck the stuffing out of him," Ralf said sweetly to Flash. "Would you like to come with us and wait for Francine there?"

"Ummm. OK, sure," Flash said, not wavering a moment from Ralf's Australian directness.

Fifteen minutes later Folsom was stretched out on his belly on a makeup table stool in the middle of Francine's dressing room. Ralf held the American's arms in his hands and had his mouth going up and down on Clint's cock as he crouched his hips under Folsom's face. Fritz was standing between Folsom's thighs, holding the American's knees in his hands and stroking his cock in and out of Clint's ass. Flash sat almost nervously on the edge of the divan nearby, but then he got comfortable enough to pull a very nice brown cock out of his pants and play with himself as he watched his fellow detective being plowed. The longer Folsom got plowed, the more comfortable and naked Flash got. Clint kept his eyes on the other detective as much as he could. Folsom wanted the hot Latino. And Folsom wanted the hot Latino to want him, so Folsom gave him a good performance with Ralf and Fritz.

After a while Ralf motioned to Flash, and he stood and came over and stood at Clint's head with the Australian, and South American and Australian cock met in all-American mouth while Folsom moaned for the German mining operation going on at the other pole.

Then Fritz was pulling Clint away from his international conference and carrying him on his embedded cock over to the divan. Fritz laid down on his back, bringing Clint down with him. Fritz folded Clint's legs up into his chest as he lay atop the German, Fritz's cock still deep inside the American. Clint looked straight ahead, and a grinning Ralf was approaching him, stroking what he was about to feed into his American prey. Ralf liked to be a little rough and cruel, and Clint liked him to be that way. Ralf had the cap of his dick pressed at the rim of Clint's hole above Fritz's buried piece. And then Clint was gasping, and gulping, and panting as Ralf started working himself inside the

American, gliding in his cock on top of Fritz's. He grabbed Clint's ankles and wishboned his legs widely, opening him as much as possible for the double penetration. Clint dug his fists into Ralf's shoulders and kneaded them as Clint shuddered and lurched with each inch of depth the thick Australian achieved. Clint's head lolled back and Flash was there in a . . . well, yes, in a flash . . . taking his fellow detective's lips in his firm, hot Latin mouth. Clint had no idea the Latino would taste this sweet.

Hernando kissed Clint deeply, lovingly, giving him comfort and assurance as Ralf's cock relentless move up into Folsom's passage on top of Fritz's dormant, but very hard cock. Flash pulled his mouth off Folsom's and kissed down his chest and belly and into his pubes. The Latino gave Folsom sweet and gentle head, as Ralf and Fritz huffed and puffed, doing all they could to bottom out inside their shared lover together. Then Flash was throwing his leg over Folsom as the American detective lay on top of Fritz on the divan and kissing Ralf now and presenting his cock for Clint's attention, which he happily gave it.

Flash and Clint were 69ing when Ralf and Fritz bottomed and started to counter stroke inside Folsom. All four hot and bothered and intense in their intimately shared fuck.

It was all too exciting for Ralf and Fritz. They both came quickly, crying out and twitching and then sighing almost in unison as their cum mingled inside Clint. They pulled out of Folsom and kissed each other in their new-found intimacy. Flash and his detective counterpart weren't done yet, though. They had barely started. All the time they were 69ing, Folsom was having flashbacks of Brad, Brad Roberts, his murdered lover and partner. Clint had been helping Ralf get settled in the States in the hope he

could be a replacement for Brad for the American detective, knowing there could be no such replacement. But this Hernando was something else entirely. Not Brad, of course, but in his own way maybe every bit as good as Brad.

Clint needed to know. Clint wanted to know if there was a possibility. He told Ralf and Fritz to go back to the club showroom. They'd had their fun for now. Clint wanted to be with Hernando. The two friends from Europe left in good spirits and without a bit of resentment, great and generous sports both. Just the thing for a perfect group party. But Clint wanted to try Hernando out alone. Clint wanted to know if Hernando could be the perfect lover.

And he was. He stretched out beside Clint on the divan and made slow, sensuous love to his new friend with his hands and his lips and his tongue—and with his sultry Latin voice. He took Clint slowly and completely. He turned Clint this way and that way, running his hands over his curves and gently, sensuously into his crevices, rubbing his thighs and calves against Clint's, his long, curve toes—just like his impossibly long, curved-up cock—along Clint's legs, as he turned his new-found lover here and there. His belly and nipples rubbing against Clint's, and then against his butt cheeks and shoulder blades. His lips buried in the hollow of Clint's neck, tracing Clint's throbbing veins, throbbing for him. Wanting him inside. Begging the hot, hard Latino to fuck him.

But still Hernando made love to Clint's body. His cock rubbing across Clint's belly as he took his lover's mouth gently but relentlessly in his again. Hernando's fists trapping Clint's. Not letting his captive touch him. Him doing all of the touching.

Him stretched out along Clint's back, imprisoning Clint's arms with his, not letting Clint touch him, while his hips moved, up and down, back and forth, around and around,

his long, sensuous cock rubbing around on the small of Clint's back, and on Clint's butt cheeks, and along his thighs and then between his thighs, making love to the sensitive skin of his inner thighs.

Clint moaning and writhing. Feeling the fuck even though Hernando hadn't even entered him yet with that long, long, slender, throbbing tool. His cock stroking up and down in Clint's crack, with Clint stretching as wide as he could, wanting the hot Latino inside him. The underside of hard cock stroking up and down on Clint's hole, causing it to pucker out in invitation. Clint sighing and groaning and begging for it. "Fuck me, fuck me, oh, fuck me now." Clint was exhausted, just from the anticipation of it and from begging for it. Hernando was holding him still, making him whimper for that long, long cock.

And then the peace of the entry. Just gliding in, lubricated by the healthy, virile profusion of cum of Ralf and Fritz and the stretching their double monster cocks had done.

Hernandez floating above Clint, the only contact for those moments his long, curved cock, as it glided into his new lover, deeper, deeper, its mushroom cap caressing Clint's undulating passage walls as it moved into him. Deeper than Ralf and Fritz had managed together. Deeper than Brad had ever gone. In, in, in. And then out most of the way. And back in, deeper still. Clint moaned deeply and licked his lips. And the contact began, slowly, tentatively, lovingly. Hernandez kissed his lover deeply on the lips and then pushed a long, thumb into his mouth. And Clint sucked deeply on it, as Hernandez's cock glided back in. The Latino lover shuddered and came in a quiet flow.

And Clint almost sobbed in relief and acceptance. Both at the beauty of it and regret that it was over.

But it wasn't over. Flash was still as hard as ever. He turned Clint on his back and knelt below him on the divan and pulled Clint's pelvis into his hips. This time he fucked Clint in vigorous strokes. Joyfully. His eyes locked on Clint's. Full of pleasure, laughter, and lust. He played with Clint's nipples and then he held Clint by his hips and smoothly, athletically rose up into a crouch and then a stand, on top of the divan, Clint stretched below him, the two of them attached at the pelvis. Hernandez stroked hard down into Clint's channel until he came a second time, in a strong gush this time. He laughed and lowered Clint onto the bed, and brought his mouth down onto Clint's dick and quickly and expertly sucked him off, while Clint writhed under him and bucked against him and arched his back in pleasure. Fully taken.

But not fully. Hernando sidesplit Clint then, pumping slowly and deeply and strongly into him. Kissing Clint on the neck, murmuring words of love into his ear.

Making love to him, not just fucking him. Clint sighed in satisfaction, wanting it to go on and on, sheathing that wondrous long, long, hot Latino dick.

But their lovemaking was arrested by a commotion out in the hallway beyond the door, and Ralf and Fritz reappeared.

"The fat lady," Fritz only managed to get out in an excited voice.

"Don't tell me. She's finished her second song set and wants her dressing room back." Folsom said in a tired, but satisfied voice. He was reluctant to give up this glorious coupling, but at least he'd always know that it wasn't from a lack of stamina or enthusiasm and interest on Flash's part that it had come to an end.

"Afraid that bird isn't going to be singing again, mate," Ralf interjected.

"What . . . ?"

"She's dead. Someone did her right there in front of our eyes on stage as she was finishing her last lad of the night."

"Oh, shit," Hernando exclaimed and jumped off the divan. He headed for the door to the dressing room's bathroom. "Here while I was enjoying myself, I wasn't doing what I was sent here for. I was supposed to keep her . . . him . . . whatever alive, not fuck around while he was being done in."

Clint turned to Ralf and Fritz. "Go out there and see that no one touches anything. Tell them there's a couple of policeman on the site and we'll be out in a couple of minutes. And I assume someone's called 911. And for God's sake don't tell them the policemen are back here doing each other."

They turned to go, but Clint held them for one more instruction. "And start asking if anyone knows where Eddie, Francine's ex, is. He'll be everyone's prime suspect even if he didn't do it."

"That won't be necessary," Clint heard Hernando say in a quiet, flat voice behind him.

All three looked over. Ramierez had opened the door to the bathroom to reveal a young blond man, obviously well past any help, lying in a pool of blood on the bathroom floor.

"Eddie, I presume?" Ramierez asked.

"Good guess," Folsom answered.

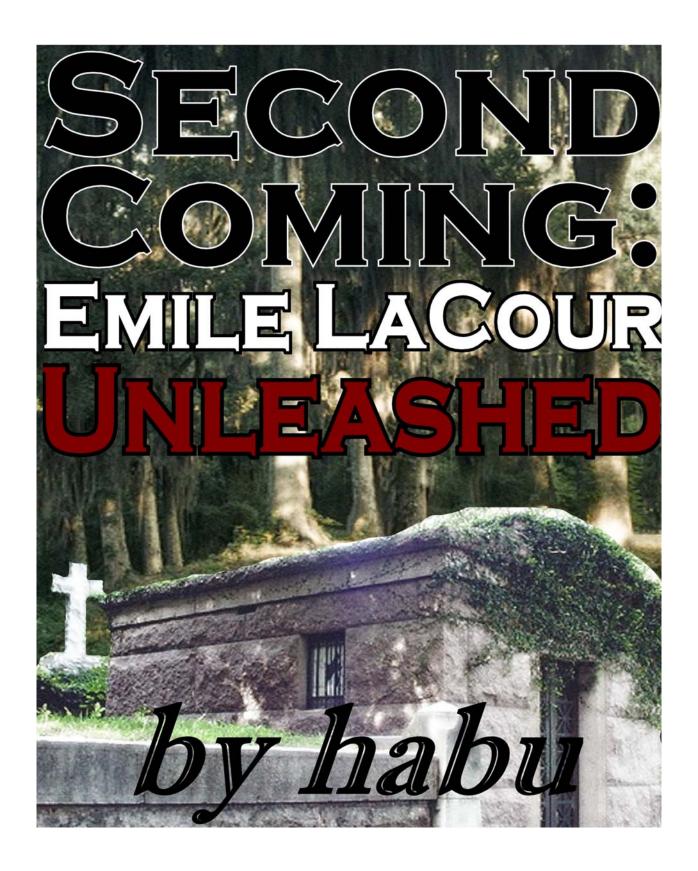
As the two detectives pulled on their clothes, preparing to go out and receive the arriving police squad, Clint leaned over and gave Hernando a tender kiss on the lips. "Welcome to homicide," he said. Flash smiled broadly. Another kiss, and then Clint said, "And welcome to my bed, if you'll have me." This time Flash's smile stretched his cheeks to the limit.

The End

ABOUT HABU

Habu, a bisexual former supersonic spy jet pilot, intelligence agent, and diplomat, is a published mainstream novelist and short story writer under another name and in another dimension of his life.

If you enjoyed **DEATH ON THE RHINE**, you might also enjoy:



SECOND COMING: Emile LaCour Unleashed

Warning: This title contains graphic language, m/m sex and violence.

Emile LaCour, scourge of the finest young male flesh of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in the plantation area of the Louisiana delta region, has been freed from his tomb to sustain himself once more by loving the young men of New Orleans to death. He does so by draining them of their blood and vitality which then rejuvenates LaCour.

Lamont Breaux, who is responsible for freeing LaCour in an effort to uncover the vast fortune LaCour's family hid before LaCour was! entombed, oversteps his greed and falls victim to LaCour's wrath. Needing a new financial manager and now wanting a companion as well, LaCour seduces Gage Angle, a blond giant member of a motorcycle gang.

LaCour's experiment to find the balance between making love to Gage and loving him to death goes awry when the curse of LaCour's never-ending life and the extreme requirements to sustain that lifestyle are transferred to Angle. Angle, however, is not the self-possessed moral decadent that LaCour is, and his struggle with what LaCour is and what he himself has become leads to a fiery conclusion.

Excerpt From <u>SECOND COMING:Emile LaCour Unleashed</u>

When Philippe reentered the tomb, at first he thought it was empty—that Jacques had left the stone vault. But then he saw what made his blood run cold. Objects—no, human appendages—were hanging over the edges of the tomb they had just opened. And the appendages weren't the mummified remains of some old Creole. There were two arms hanging out near the head of the coffin and two legs out near the bottom. But they were white as marble, with rivulets of blood still streaming down from multiple slashings. Philippe forced himself to shuffle over to the coffin and look inside. A deep moan escaped his lips. It was Jacques. But not the robust Jacques Philippe had left here just a few moments ago; a withered and stark-white Jacques. A Jacques whose handsome and once-virile body had been slashed and pierced, although there were just a few traces of blood to witness to the ravishment of his buddy's body.

Philippe let out a scream and turned to run out of the vault. But that's when he realized he was no longer alone in the tomb. Standing between him and the door now was a man. Not just a man—a magnificently built man appearing to be in his thirties. He was dark of complexion, with fine, strong facile features, and had a body-builder's physique, which, incongruously, was naked. In fact, he had exactly the same body build that Philippe's friend Jacques had had with Philippe last saw him alive. But, whereas Jacques had been a smooth-skinned blond, this new visitor to the tomb had dark hair—and not just hair on his head, but he had a pattern of curly dark hair on his arms and legs and on his chest, trailing down his cut torso and into his pubes. And there, between his legs, was the most gigantic cock and heavy balls that Philippe had ever seen on a human. They rivaled what he'd seen on the stallion on his father's farm. The man's cock must have been well over a foot long.

Philippe stood, mesmerized, at this apparition, his attention focused on that huge cock. And before he could snap out of his surprise and awe, the dark visitor had pounced on him and was tearing away his clothing with sharp nails extending from long, slender fingers, and his teeth had gone to and sunk in the carotid artery in Philippe's neck.

* * * *

When Lamont Breaux cautiously slid through the entrance of the vault, the silver lance poised in front of him, he saw what he had more than half-way expected to see.

The lid to Emile LaCour's stone coffin had been rolled back in place, and the finely muscled body of Philippe was laid on his back on top of the stone. The young man was pale and naked. His arms were dangling over the edge of the lid on each side,

and his legs were spread wide and his ankles were being held in the grip of the magnificent creature whose monster cock was stroking inside Philippe's ass hard.

Trickles of blood were dribbling from a variety of piercings and slashings on Phillippe's body, and the attacking stranger was dipping down to tongue the wounds here and there to capture all of the blood.

Breaux watched in fascination as nearly a foot and a half of cock pulled out of the young man's overstretched asshole and then thrust back in, only to be withdrawn again and thrust back in. This part of the legend was true then, Breaux contemplated. Emile LaCour had been fully capable of fucking young men to death. For surely this was the legendary Emile LaCour, brought back to life, rejuvenated by the blood and vitality of winsome youths. Just as Breaux had calculated.

Philippe was lying docilely on the hard stone, far beyond putting up any sort of a struggle. His head was lolled to where he was facing Breaux. There was a little smile on his face, as if he was enjoying this ultimate fuck, but Breaux could see that the light in his eyes was dimming, that the time of the full transference of his life forces to the reborn LaCour was near at hand. LaCour's head came down to Philippe's chest, and his teeth dug into the aureole surrounding one of the young man's nipples. Philippe gave a weak lurch at the bite and sucking here, and his eyes briefly flashed and then started to dim again.

LaCour rose up off the young man and pulled his cock all the way out to where Breaux could see the huge mushroom head on the tool and then, pushing the young man's legs out wide and throwing his head back and giving a scream of triumph that echoed around the stone chamber, LaCour thrust his cock in to the hilt, and Breaux

could almost hear the whoosh of the fountaining of centuries-held semen inside the center of the young man. A flow of cum gushed out of Philippe's ass around the root of LaCour's embedded cock, and the light went out of the young man's eyes and all of the tension went out of his limbs.

With a slurping sound, LaCour pulled his cock out of the dead youths' ass and turned in a pouncing stance toward Breaux. Breaux, trying to remain calm in what he had long assumed would be the most dangerous moment of the unfolding of his plans, positioned the silver lance in front of him, prepared to take the weight of any sudden attack, and fought to summon up a steady voice.

"Welcome, Emile LaCour. You are free because I have freed you. You have fed sufficiently now because I have provided you these fine young bodies to rejuvenate yours. You have been away from the world for more than a hundred years. I wish to be your friend and business partner, and you need me."

LaCour snorted and visibly relaxed, contemplating what Breaux had said, turning it over in his intelligent, but long unchallenged brain. His intelligence won.

"There is much you need to learn before you can walk the world again and hunt on your own," Breaux now said in a soothing voice. "I wish to be your support and guide. I only ask that you share the wealth of the Fontnets that I know you have hidden away. There is much more than enough gold there, I'm sure, for the both of us. Here, cover yourself with this cloak and come up to the house now with me and let us begin."

Breaux knew then that he had won. Emile LaCour was relaxed. He was flexing his muscles, fully appreciating his return to the land of the living. He gave Breaux a big, blissful smile, and Breaux relaxed the stance of the silver lance—but only

symbolically—as the newly strong arms of LaCour pushed the lid of his erstwhile coffin open again long enough for him to dump the spent body of Philippe in on top of that of Jacques. And then he rolled the lid back closed, he accepted and wrapped the proffered black cloak around his newly virile body, and the two new partners, still wary of each other, moved up to the plantation house to begin their new life together...

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