

THE FUGITIVE



Robert L. Fish

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THE FUGITIVE

ROBERT L. FISH

To Mame, Ruth, and Cathy

standing right in front of them, trying to pass himself off as the future of their party. His very presence in their circle makes a mockery of their ideology.

What is unclear, in fact, is how serious of a threat they really are. Although they are animated by utterly evil notions, the Brazilian Nazis also seem disorganized, incompetent and more than a little crazy. Fish balances the sense of the real threat posed by this group with the notion that they are just disordered enough to fall for Ari's back-breaking trick. The motivation for Ari's mission is twofold: to kill a movement while it is still in its embryonic form, before it can grow into a real danger, and to refuse these war criminals their safe haven, their escape from justice. The Fugitive is a most unusual spy novel, one that blends history, suspense and post-war politics and sends into this mix an unusual hero looking to confront the ghosts of the past. It is Fish's first and finest work, expressive of his unique imaginative capabilities and capacious sympathy.

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immediately forgetting him, dash down the gangplank to be kissed by women and hugged fiercely by men clustered on the dock. Children indeed, he thought, with some satisfaction; children indeed.

The fog was burning away and the sun now glistened from the white buildings and lit the bay. The giant cranes creaked and groaned as they dipped their snouts into the hold, swaying gently under the tension of the rising loads, and laying them gracefully upon the cobblestones of the dock. People below ran back and forth, searching the railing for familiar faces; a vendor of pineapple had opened his stand at the foot of the gangplank, and was busily slicing his wares and spreading them out. The purser, a hulking blond man in his late twenties, leaned on the rail beside von Roesler, frowning.

“A circus!” he said bitterly. “What we load in Hamburg in four hours, we must fight in order to unload in a full day here!” He pointed below; a playful wrestling match had developed among the stevedores, laughter rose from the group. Some had gone to the pineapple stand and were eating and talking; the crane-load waited patiently for someone to unhitch the ropes. “*Schnell!*” the purser screamed, leaning over the rail perilously. No one paid any attention; the purser slapped the rail in disgust. “Brazilians!” he said biting, and stamped back to the hold cover shaking his head.

After lunch von Roesler carefully locked his diary away and left the ship to walk about the nearby streets. The tropical sun burned, even in the winter month of June. He was sorry he had come with vest and jacket, but reminded himself that a person in his position could scarcely appear otherwise. He also reflected that his regular uniform would have been even more uncomfortable. The beggars about

certain vitality; yes, a definite vitality. Which someday we shall turn to an advantage, he concluded. For children can be led, and we have the destiny to lead.

crack. "I'm sorry," he finally said, forcing humiliation into his voice. "But you know the situation, Uncle Ernst. Or you should. Time is running out, and I have a job to do." He paused and stared out of the car window. They were climbing the winding road of the mountain, and the ocean was spread below them, a scene of incredible beauty, but he saw none of this. He tried to smile casually, hating the feeling of inferiority, of callowness, that he had always suffered as a child with his father's brother. He's a senile old fool, he thought, and I am Erick von Roesler of the SD. "How have you been, Uncle Ernst?"

The old man looked at him sideways, crouching in his overcoat. "Cold," he answered grimly, honestly.

Von Roesler laughed. "After fifteen years in the tropics? In Brazil? Uncle, Uncle! You were born cold!"

There was a sudden rustling from the other, as if he were attempting to burrow deeper into his overcoat. "Yes," said his uncle slowly. "You and I. We were both born cold." He hastened his next words, as if to pass an unpleasant moment. "And how is your mother?"

"Fine. She is in Berlin, you know, visiting with Monica. You saw Monica's last picture? No, I suppose not; not out here. But you knew that she had become an actress? Quite a good one, as a matter of fact, or at least so they say. She goes by another name, of course. Oh, things are going quite well, Uncle!"

"Are they?" The tone was querying, impersonal.

"Yes, they are." Enough of this, von Roesler thought. "At home things are fine. How are they here?"

The old man thought before answering. They were high up on the *serra* by this time, and the scene below was one that he well remembered and had always loved. The island port

of Santos hemmed in by rivers glistening in the sun, the lacelike beaches of São Vicente and Praia Grande to the right, the breakers visible as dancing white lines on deserted Guarujá to the left. Fifteen years in Brazil, and now what?

“What is going to happen, Erick?” The old man held his breath a moment, expelling it in his next question, as if it were forced from him. “Will there be a war?”

Erick shrugged. “You overestimate my place in the councils of the Reich, Uncle. But I should say, not necessarily. Only if it is forced upon us.” He looked over at his uncle. “Have you arranged the meeting?”

The old man shrank back into his corner, pulling the heavy coat about him. “At my *chácara*. Tomorrow.”

“*Chácara*?”

“My fazenda. The farm, Hartzlandia, you know. We should be there by evening.”

“By evening?” Almost instinctively, von Roesler glanced at his wrist watch. “My God! How far is it?”

The old man smiled. “Two hundred kilometers from here, and very close as they measure distances in Brazil. This is a big country, you know, Erick, and our roads aren’t the autobahns of Germany.”

Erick frowned. “Who will be at the meeting?”

“Everyone that I could think of. Or rather, that I could get. It was not easy, believe me,” the old man continued calmly. “There have been some bad frosts these past two weeks, and many of them did not want to leave their farms. But the majority finally agreed to come.”

“And they represent ...?”

Chapter 3

Chácara Hartzlandia covered an area of twelve thousand hectares, spread along the Rio Taquary, and running almost to the little village of Itapeva. It was principally a coffee fazenda, although it also raised its own necessities in beans, rice, potatoes, and corn. The rolling hills were lined with the neat rows of bushy covas, rising and falling over the undulating land to disappear in the green distance. The drying sheds and the workers' shacks were located in a sprawling banana grove at the side of the river, well out of sight of the big house; the stables and barns had their area further back in a thick stand of pine. The house stood alone on a hummock; below it the gardens ran in riotous color past a rough-stone-edged pool down to the river.

It was a great chalet, the gently sloping roof overhanging balconies that encircled the building at each floor, joined by wooden stairways. Huge hand-hewn beams of dark wood supported the stained plank walls; leaded glass windows studded the high walls and winked in the afternoon sun. It might have been transplanted intact from Württemberg, or Ostmark, Erick thought; it could have fronted the icy Bodensee, or stared down on Innsbruck from the challenging rocks above. His eyes unconsciously swept the horizon for snow-tipped mountains, and the growing sense of displacement that he had felt since leaving the boat slowly seeped away. "Beautiful," he said sincerely. His uncle smiled slightly, but it was difficult to tell if the smile indicated sympathy or amusement.

They dined by flickering candlelight, although the farm boasted a modern generator, and afterwards in the huge living room listened to phonograph records before a crackling fire. The night had turned cold, and the fire was cheerful and welcome. They talked of family and the past; the subject of the meeting and the reason for Erick's trip was avoided as if by mutual unspoken consent. His uncle was bending over the ancient phonograph, changing a record, and Erick was preparing to offer excuses for an early bedtime, when headlights swung into the driveway from the river road, and they could hear the labored clanking of an old car pulling up before the house. The motor coughed itself apologetically into silence, a car door slammed.

"Von Roesler!" a deep voice bayed. "*Gott im Himmel!* Why doesn't the old man put a light on this *verdammte* driveway? Von Roesler, you old swine! A light!"

The old man rushed to swing back the door, and yellow light poured over the balcony, spilling down to the huge blond figure standing beside a battered Ford. "Goetz!" he cried in delight. "Come up! Come up! How did you ever make it in that wheelbarrow? From Blumenau, yet!"

"Wheelbarrow, eh?" said Goetz, clumping up the stairway. "This wheelbarrow will be running when both you and your fancy hearse have long gone to the graveyard!" He paused at the top of the steps, a wild-looking giant wearing a leather jacket over a turtle-neck sweater, his curly hair ruffled, eyeing the two men calmly. "So this is little Erick, eh? For whom we make long trips when we have a million things to do! Hello, little Erick! How is the *Vaterland*?" Erick felt his face reddening. The big man pushed past him almost brusquely, his handshake an obvious thing in passing, quick and almost insolent, going to warm himself

Chapter 4

They were standing about the room drinking coffee and speaking desultorily when Erick entered the next morning. His uncle introduced him to each in turn, and they all shook hands silently, wonderingly, diffident in the presence of a man they knew held office in the Third Reich of Hitler. The chairs and couch had been drawn up to form a rough semicircle about the fireplace, and Erick placed himself with his back to the mantel, waiting silently and aloofly while they quietly seated themselves. He stood erect and calm, sure of himself and watched them coldly as they seated themselves. Then, suddenly flinging his hand in their faces, he snapped, “Heil Hitler!”

There was a moment of startled silence, then “Heil Hitler!” loudly and enthusiastically from Gunther and Strauss; a further pause and a more subdued “Heil Hitler” from Gerhmann and Lange. A snort from Goetz. Silence from the old man von Roesler, and from Riepert, the lumberman from Paraná. Erick smiled grimly to himself as he filed the reaction of each in his sharp memory. He waited until the renewed shuffling had again subsided before beginning to speak.

“Gentlemen. Citizens of the Third Reich. You are all aware, I am sure, of the situation that exists today in the homeland. The Führer has made exceptional efforts to avoid war, and these efforts, so far, have been successful. But our enemies are not satisfied to allow this peaceful situation to endure.

“German nationals, who have played the greatest part in the development of every country in the world, are being persecuted and made to suffer today for no reason other than the fact that they are German! This is the truth, gentlemen; the international conspiracy of Jews and so-called Christian Democrats will not be satisfied until every man, woman, and child in the Reich is driven into starvation and despair!”

He paused and studied the faces before him. Goetz was eyeing him coldly, almost sardonically; his uncle sat huddled in one corner, blankly studying his veined hands. Gunther was leaning forward excitedly, drinking in the words; Strauss was vigorously nodding his head. The tension had disappeared from the faces of Lange and Gehrman; they looked interested. Riepert was staring out of the window, his face disclosing nothing.

“Gentlemen. In this situation, to be blunt, the Fatherland calls upon all of its loyal sons and daughters in all parts of the world for support. These hostile elements that surround us on all sides have long taken advantage of our weakness, of our lack of organization, of our sincere desire for peace. As Germans we are beginning to once again raise our heads under the inspired leadership of our beloved Führer; we are throwing off the shame of the past, we are beginning once again to stand on our feet. But these elements will not leave us in peace! It is only a question of time until they change their attacks from verbal and economic ones to actual intervention in the internal affairs of the Reich!” He eyed them all coldly, conviction in every line of his taut body. “And when that time comes, they will be smashed down; taught that we Germans also have a right to live, and to grow, and to fulfill the destiny of the Third Reich!”

between the different countries....” The others moved around him as he spread his papers upon the table top and continued to talk.

This was the young Captain Erick von Roesler of the Sicherheitsdienst, provisionally assigned by the SD as Gauleiter-to-be for the country of Brazil, in South America, in the month of June, in the year of 1939.

His new post required him to concentrate on the recruitment of foreign workers into the slave labor program. In this new assignment, von Roesler was again swept with an excess of enthusiasm which bore no relationship to the purposes of the program; or possibly he felt that the impressing of labor was an end in itself. At any rate, the result was the same. Since dead slaves do no work, he found himself once again reassigned. This time there was no promotion attached.

His new position was more logical; he found himself posted to Dachau, where his activities, rather than causing unfavorable comment, aided his commendation record. Von Roesler had finally found his forte. In quick succession, Auschwitz saw him, and Birkenau. To his surprise, he discovered that he had a certain talent for organization, combined to some extent with a technical ability almost bordering on engineering. Through his efforts he was able to increase the daily output of the cremation ovens spectacularly; even the technicians whose function it was to see to the proper operation of the ovens had to admit that von Roesler played no small part in the success of the extermination program.

But it was actually not until early in 1943 that he really felt settled. This was when his service was finally recognized, and he was transferred on a permanent basis to the long-established camp at Buchenwald. The years had given him maturity; victims capable of working were no longer whipped into the false showers; those who could walk and bend over were saved for the factories of Weimar, their place in the daily file to the ovens taken by the utterly decrepit, or the women too weak to contribute, or the useless children. His title in his new position was Assistant

to the Obergruppenführer, and it also carried a promotion to the level of colonel.

The mental development of Erick von Roesler in these years might be interesting to study, were it unfortunately not so standard. The vital necessity for furthering the destiny of the Third Reich, which had manifested itself in the excesses of Lithuania, had turned in his months with Reichsminister Saukel to bitter resentment at his victims for having forced these very excesses. From this resentment to a state of active hatred was a short step. Hatred being a reason in itself, no feeling of guilt could, or ever did, accrue to his activities.

His hatred had no particular focus. He hated all his enemies, but particularly he hated the Jews, because the ones he encountered at Buchenwald were German, and because they were not in the camp for sabotage or political acts against the Reich. He secretly considered du Waldeck and Koch weak and almost degenerate, for they seemed to kill and torture from pleasure, rather than from his more exalted hatred.

Brazil seemed far away in those days of daily tasks, but von Roesler never forgot it. He kept a map of the vast country on his desk and in free moments would pore over it, tracing with his finger the tiny path that led from Santos, winding erratically along the coast to cut in to Itapave. He never ceased being amazed at the insignificance of what had been a full day's journey, when compared with the great reaches of the country that dwarfed this minute part.

The winning of the war having already been assured by the constant elimination of enemies, either in the bloody blitzkrieg battles to the east, or in the gas chambers, he often sat back at night and planned his future. Goetz! Without any doubt tainted by more than a little Jewish

blood. And Riepert; not a common Jewish name, no; but certainly a Jew. Little Erick, eh? From his office he could see the huge prison yard, and the floodlights bathing the area in cold shadowlessness; he looked back in his memory to Dachau, and Ausechwitz, and Birkenau. Little Erick, eh? Hartzlandia would rise before him, the Berchtesgaden of his future. His foolish uncle was growing old, senile; imagine the old man inviting Jews to that meeting! And then, having invited them, imagine the old man feeling miserable because they left! Well, when the time came, the old man would pose no problem. Von Roesler's fingers would stroke the warm wood of his pipe rhythmically, the sinuous twisting trails of smoke blending in the air with his lush dreams.

All this, of course, was before the bombings. It was only at Hamburg, on that fateful night of August 3, 1943, that the first maggots of doubt ever entered his mind. The order had come crisply to the apartment of the Obergruppenführer and had been routinely transferred to his office. A swift call to Weimar started a priority train on its way to the camp; within thirty minutes three hundred inmates had been brutally routed out of their tiered shelves, certain that their final hour had arrived. Von Roesler supervised the loading of the cattle cars personally, saw the last frightened animal beaten into withdrawal from the doors, the panels slammed into place and latched. He nodded to the signalman, who waved his red lantern and scrambled aboard to join him in the small coach at the rear.

"What's up?" asked the signalman cheerfully. He was not at all impressed by his companion's uniform. In those days of the war, trainmen were as valuable as colonels.

Von Roesler silenced him with a look, but for the first time he felt a twinge of uneasiness. It was quite unusual, this. It

was the first time that inmates had been removed so far from camp as a work party. Usually they either left as part of the daily working units that went into Weimar to the factories or they left the camp for their last trip to some mass grave beyond the walls. This was very unusual.

The sight of Hamburg, while the train was still fifteen miles away, was incredible. A wall of flame tapering upward into a twisting tower that reached higher than the eye could see, past the sky, farther than the mind could encompass; columns of smoke shot through with fiery red flares that appeared and disappeared, winding about fiercely through the black pillars, all and everything fighting madly to climb into that holocaust that raged higher and higher, wider and wider, over the city. As their train inched forward, they could hear the hungry roar of the firestorm; a rain of tiny debris pattered against the coach roof; through the window the wind could be heard, rushing insanely into that unbelievable vacuum. The train ground to a shuddering halt; von Roesler dropped to the ground and ran panting past the now silent cattle cars to stand by the engine, frozen with disbelief and horror.

There, to the left, where the docks had stood, nothing but a solid wall of searing flame! And Hohelft, Barsbeck, Elmsbüttel, one gigantic and growing pyre! Harburg and the Borstelmannsweg section shooting howling fire to the skies! This could not be Hamburg! This mass of crackling, snarling, howling fire crazily twisting into the sky could not be Hamburg! It was impossible; one could not encompass the disaster. What had happened to the Luftwaffe? What had gone wrong with the vaunted radar guns? Hamburg, best-protected city in the Reich, in the world; Hamburg, whose civil defense was so developed, so famed, as to serve as the model for all cities of the Reich facing air

deviation. Those who persisted in arguing died a few months before their time. Their coadjutors maintained intelligent silence. Those who fell back toward Berlin were resigned to die for their beliefs, or were merely postponing the inevitable, for the talk of War Crimes trials had already been heard in both London and Washington.

Erick von Roesler belonged to neither camp. After the shocking experience of the Hamburg holocaust, he had withdrawn into himself, living alone with his hate, which had widened to include both the betrayers and the betrayed. When Paris fell, he coldly accepted the fact of defeat and put into practice a plan that had been maturing since the latter days of 1943. The passports and identity cards were not merely correct in every detail; they were authentic. He had obtained them in Paris on leave in February of 1944. On August 26, 1944, he requisitioned a car from the motor pool at Weimar, stationed his own taciturn chauffeur at the wheel, and left Buchenwald for the last time. His sister Monica, laden with the other counterment necessary for the plan, was met by arrangement in Frankfort, and they sped westward across Germany. Her presence was due less to family loyalty than to the feeling that she might be useful both to his escape and to his future plans.

The highways were crowded with troop carriers and trucks, but despite this they made fair time. The presence of a woman in an official car seemed to excite no undue notice. There were many official cars on the roads those nights, traveling in both directions, and no one was of a mood to question or pay particular attention to their occupants.

They crossed the border at Mulhouse and drove south through Besançon toward Creuzot. Monica had provided sandwiches and wine, and they ate as they drove, throwing their litter carelessly out of the window, as being almost

symbolic of their nonreturn. At Montceaux-Mines they stopped to fill the tank with gasoline from cans they had carried in the luggage compartment, and immediately resumed their journey. Just beyond the outskirts of the little town they left the main highway and bumped over a winding road that twisted through the low hills leading toward the Loire. They had been driving eighteen hours when they finally pulled up at their destination.

The ramshackle farmhouse was where he remembered it, abandoned and umninded as per his cabled instructions. Even in those terrifying and confused days the instructions of the SD were properly attended to. They changed clothes in the car and with the help of the driver dragged their stores of potatoes and turnips into the shallow vegetable cellar. When the car had turned about and sped away for the border, they cut small holes in some of the potatoes, secreted their small stock of cut diamonds inside, and replugged the holes. These potatoes they scratched for identification, and buried them at the bottom of the ragged jute sacks. After that they had only to wait for the front to pass them, which was much simpler than attempting to pass the front.

December saw them settled in a refugee camp outside of Paris: M. Jules Richereau and his wife Jeanne. There they stayed for over six months, waiting for papers permitting them to emigrate to Portugal. Erick read in the papers, in black headlines, that Buchenwald had been liberated, and some of the inmates had been transferred to hospitals and camps in the Paris area, but fortunately these were not assigned to the same camps that held rehabilitated French. Monica stayed close to camp; Erick went into the city on very rare occasions, and then only to check on their exit request. The other inmates of their camp considered the couple morose; the aura of hatred that surrounded Erick

They spent almost seven years in Portugal, at a small town called Trafaria, across the Tejo from Lisbon. It was a place where the presence of strangers was not so unusual as to excite constant surveillance. Still, it was safely away from the standard trail of refugees who constantly beat their bewildered way across the world through the portals of Lisbon. His trips to the capital were rare, and then mainly to exchange one of his dwindling stock of cut diamonds for money, an operation that caused neither surprise nor suspicion in that city of international barter.

In Trafaria, he read of the Nuremberg trials, and noted with calm indifference that Eichmann and Bormann had also managed to escape. The details of the depositions and sentences of the others did not interest him; whatever they got, they deserved; they had betrayed the Third Reich. He folded the paper to the sports section and sipped his apéritif as he read of the prowess of Real of Madrid. In February of 1952, they finally became citizens of Portugal, and in March of the same year they emigrated again, this time legally and safely, to Brazil.

The second time that Erick von Roesler saw Brazil was in April of 1952, from the second-class deck of a second-class steamer of the Companhia Sul Americana de Navegação. Monica was below in the stuffy cabin, tying their belongings into shabby bundles; he was alone on deck, peering ahead through the early dawn. They crept into Rio de Janeiro through a low fog, as on his first visit; the faint outlines of the tug pulling them appeared ghostly at the ship's side. Brazil was always my destiny, he thought, his fist tightening against the smooth, damp railing. Here the betrayals shall be punished; here we shall build anew with no mistakes, for we shall base our building on the honest and sweet fact of hatred.

He stared ahead at the city he could faintly hear but not see. Brazil was the same; it had not changed, but Erick von Roesler was older, more bitter, the lines of his face etched in the acid of his thoughts, his hair sprinkled with streaks of white, his tall figure beginning to stoop. I shall never leave Brazil, he thought. Here I shall stay. Brazil has not changed, nor has my hatred on which I live, and on which I shall grow. ...

Chapter 1

The small, dumpy man woke sharply, the ever-present trembling slowly subsiding, the deep throb of the plane's huge motors returning through the frightening dreams to his consciousness. The tiny pillow had slipped from his shoulders, his head had fallen against the window frame; the briefcase chained to his wrist had twisted and the latch was cutting into the back of his hand. He pulled it back into a comfortable position and yawned deeply. Sunlight slotted the pulsing cabin, creeping in through the half-closed curtains, but the other passengers still slept soundly. A dead planet in orbit, high in the thin air; a satellite morgue, he thought, and glanced at his watch. Five A.M.; four hours to Rio de Janeiro.

Below, the jungle had disappeared during the night. The mottled stained green carpet that had shamed their noisy passage with mysterious silence was gone with his fleeting memory of it. Now there were splotched-brown oddly shaped hills, sewn to the endless plain with blue threads of winding watercourses. The reflection of the sun winked from one to the other; from twenty-five thousand feet up it was impossible to tell if they were small creeks or large rivers, or if the higher dull mounds were respectable hills or low hummocks.

Relativity, he thought, amazed as always at the odd fare his mind served up for inspection. Einstein always explained things horizontally; he should have explained them vertically. At least airplane passengers would have

understood. His eye, searching the earth for diversion, caught and followed a beaten road twisting below, leading in the distance to a lonely house — a tiny block, a toy, lost in the vast isolation. And why, he began to wonder, would anyone live out here; and then suddenly smiled wryly. Let us assume a fugitive, he thought; one with either a flair for stupidity or a wonderful sense of humor, hiding in plain sight, safe from all dangers except the all-watching eye of passing planes, or the more punishing desolation of his endless solitude. A shadow crossed his mind; let us think of something else, he thought. There are many things I shall have to learn about fugitives and their ways, but all in good time.

The stewardess, noting his activity, was hovering over him, the usual professional smile for a fellow nonsleeper oddly missing from her pretty, vacuous face. It would never occur to her to wonder why some stubborn farmer might choose to sweat out his years on barren soil somewhere in the vast unknown beneath the steady wings. To her, the flight would be a familiar tunnel filled with night and small coffee cups, with Kleenex and whiskey-sodas, with Dramamine and unfolded blankets, which you entered quite normally at Port-of-Spain in Trinidad, and from which you routinely emerged at Galeão in Rio de Janeiro. The romances of her life, he thought, would draw their substance from the occasional presence aboard of a famous movie star, a flirtation with a handsome pilot or influential passenger, or the controlled, shared fear of a stuttering motor over the dark emptiness below, bringing from the subconscious that momentary doubt of eternity that always came with the unexpected.

“Are you all right, sir?”

“Quite all right, thank you.”

“Are you sure?”

flashing light calling the stewardess forward, her nonchalant air as she picked her way down the aisle, tucking in a blanket here, adjusting a pillow there, until she could disappear beyond the softly closing door leading to the pilot's compartment without arousing suspicion. And just how had they told her? Did they say: "Hey, cutie, what's the man in 6B like? Is he big? Hard? Gangster type?" In spite of his panic, he was forced to smile at this. Or did they say: "Take a good look at 6B, he has two million dollars in cold cash in that innocent-looking briefcase, stole it and left for Brazil one step ahead of the police"? Or possibly they may have said: "Look, honey, see that 6B gets all the service his little heart desires; he's a famous man, we may have to borrow money some day and it never hurts to have friends"? The smile faded; how they had told her wasn't too important. What was important was that both he and his briefcase were now well known to the plane's crew, who meant nothing. But just as well known, without a doubt, to the Brazilian authorities in Rio de Janeiro four hours away. That was quite important.

In sudden resolve he slipped from his seat and walked hurriedly down the aisle to the rest room, the briefcase bumping against his legs in the confined space. He could feel the eyes of the stewardess upon him as he edged through the narrow door and slid the latch shut. In nervous haste he stripped off his jacket and shirt, removed his undershirt and stuffed it into the briefcase over the stacked blocks that lay within. After a moment's thought he added his socks, putting his shoes back on over his bare feet. A paperback mystery from his jacket pocket went on top, and then, in desperation, his pocket handkerchief. He searched himself for other detritus to add to the cache; there was nothing. He considered and rejected the idea of stuffing towels from the lavatory into the offending emptiness.

Chapter 2

The airport buildings at Galeão glared blinding white, their black shadows empty caverns in the shimmering tarmac. He shaded his eyes against the painful reflection and followed the silent file of tired passengers into the long low building, the sweat beginning to rise under his tight collar and run down inside his shirt. His ears still buzzed faintly from the hours of motor noise, and the briefcase suddenly seemed unbearably heavy to his wrist. In dismay he noted that he had forgotten to undo the chain; in haste he fished the key from his watch pocket and unlatched the tiny lock; no one seemed to notice.

They were halted by a rope slung across the corridor; beyond they could see the open window of the Health Office and Immigration, with uniformed figures inside shuffling papers endlessly and staring blankly at the incoming passengers. There is something fascinating about the similarity of customs procedures and officials in every country, he thought. True, the original instincts of self-preservation in all basic groupings probably have common roots, but it still seems rather startling that, stemming from different mores and habit patterns, following completely diverse paths of development, they all seemed to have arrived together at the same paper-shuffling, blank-faced bureaucracy, reflecting their mutual fear of strangers in identical rituals of pointless documents and illegible rubber stamps. They must have hidden antennae for secret

communication, like ants, he thought. Or more terrifying, radio and television, like humans.

The rope dropped; the passengers edged forward, fumbling for passports and vaccination certificates, hampered by books and overcoats and overnight bags, the heat a blanket that muffled everything, making each action a chore in slow motion. He tensed as he presented his documents at the first counter, but the sweating police officials occasioned him no delay. Any radio accusation that had arrived apparently was not filtered down to these low echelons. A sudden, unfounded elation seized him. Maybe I imagined the whole thing, he thought. Maybe the stewardess was merely curious. Maybe the stewardess was only nearsighted. Stamps fell, cards passed back and forth; the line edged forward uncomfortably to the customs shed.

The customs benches were being filled; porters were slinging luggage haphazardly from the carts to the low barriers; passengers were beginning to awaken from the narcosis of the flight and were frantically attempting to attract the attention of a customs guard. A conference was in progress at the official desk; declarations were being examined and separated; the heat bore down relentlessly on everything.

He saw the flight crew come through, their squat leather bags bulging with papers, maps, dirty clothing, and possibly a contraband bottle of whiskey hidden somewhere in the depths. The stewardess whispered something to the others, inclining her head in his direction, and they all eyed him curiously, but only for a moment. He was a passing phenomenon who had lightened a dull flight with a few minutes of excited radio chatter, but that was last night and years ago. They could always read about it in the newspapers; their minds were already on a three-day

holiday, and the smooth hot beach, and the noisy night clubs. He saw the small eyes of the stewardess linger hesitatingly on the briefcase cradled in his arms, and he suddenly knew very well that his panic in the plane had not been based upon imagination. Quite without knowing why, he forced his fears behind him and winked at her in a broad, friendly manner. She turned away flushing, and a few moments later stumped out after her companions. Ingratitude, he thought with a bitter smile; think of the hours of conversation I have provided you with.

“Senhor Hans?” A customs official was glancing up from a declaration, impatiently glaring about the group of passengers. His face, although young in years, was set in the bitter lines of ingrained officialdom; his flat eyes peered about in barely stifled animosity; the heavy features were shimmering with sweat. Nobody paid any attention; the struggle with baggage went on uninterruptedly. “Senhor Hans?” The voice was accusing now, and the official referred once again to the declaration in his hand. A sudden thought seemed to come to him. “Senhor Hans Busch?” He pronounced it “Pushy,” but the tone of accusation had completely disappeared, replaced by respect. My God! he thought with a start, that’s me! A fine beginning!

“I’m sorry,” he said, touching the official on the arm. “I’m afraid I didn’t ...”

“Senhor Hans Busch?”

“Why, yes,” he said, beginning to reach for his documents, attempting to portray to the best of his ability Everytourist faced with Everycustoms.

“*O senhor têm bagagem?*”

“I beg your pardon? I don’t speak ...”

“Lockage? Package?” The voice dropped suddenly to a hoarse whisper, accompanied by a barely perceptible nudge. “*Haben Sie Koffer?*”

The official indicated the suitcases being opened on the benches. He saw his new leather case standing alone to one side and reached for it, but the official politely picked it up and headed for a door at one side. “Please?” he said over his shoulder, “Please!” It was quite as if he were answering his own question. The other passengers eyed them sourly, certain that either influence or a well concealed bribe had smoothed the way to faster service. He trailed along, his heart pounding. Well, he thought forlornly, here we go. Please, God, don’t let it fail before it even begins!

The room, windowless — an obvious afterthought in the airport construction — was formed by two roughly finished walls of cinder-block set in a corner of the customs shed. A halfhearted coat of whitewash attempted to disguise the provisional character of the construction, but only served to emphasize it. A badly vibrating fan rattled on a shelf, pushing the hot air about listlessly. A tall, saturnine man with a lean tanned face and an aggressive mustache arose from a desk and came forward. He took the declaration form from the customs official, who proceeded to seat himself unobtrusively on one corner of the desk, reaching over to shut the door almost apologetically. With the door closed the heat became unbearable, but the mustached man seemed almost cool as he turned about.

“Mr. Busch?” he asked gently.

“Yes.”

“I am Captain José Da Silva. May I see your passport, please?”

He fumbled in the side pocket of his jacket where he was certain he had placed his documents after Immigration, but his fingers closed only on a crumpled handkerchief. But I put that in the briefcase, he thought idiotically; I must have had two. He began to tremble, angry for the weakness, and for having misplaced his passport.

“Rather odd seeing a captain in civilian clothes,” he said, smiling foolishly, his hands patting his various breast pockets in desperation, hampered in his search by the awkward briefcase. He suddenly seemed to realize that this encumbrance was no longer a physical part of his person; he set it against the desk leg as unobtrusively as possible, continuing his search.

“Yes,” said the captain dryly. “Your passport, please?”

His hand closed in last resort on a heavily laden trouser pocket, and he drew out the missing passport, furious with himself for having placed it in so unusual a place. Stupid! he thought. Stupid, stupid, stupid! And even more stupid to allow it to upset you this much; relax and get yourself under control! But really, a trouser pocket — my God!

The tall man examined the document minutely, riffling through the pages and noting the various visas and stamped dates. He studied the personal data in the front and looked up impartially to compare the face before him with the photograph in his hand, after which he quietly closed the booklet and casually slipped it into his jacket pocket as if in a moment of forgetfulness.

“Would you care to open your bag, please?”

Da Silva’s thin fingers skimmed the contents, carefully judging the inside dimensions against the outside shape, barely disturbing the shirts and socks, but passing with great efficiency through the neatly arranged clothing.

arms, or bribe enough officials. Or any one of many things. Particularly any one of many things. You are correct in thinking that there are no currency regulations here in Brazil, but you are completely wrong in feeling that this applies to you." He leaned forward impressively, never removing his piercing eyes from the disheveled figure before him.

"Believe me, Mr. Busch, when I tell you that our government is extremely serious about your case. We are interested in this money and the purpose for which it is intended. We are quite certain that we know this purpose, and we fully expect to prevent it. Believe me."

"But I tell you ..."

The tall, thin man shook his finger coldly. "Mr. Busch. There is only one thing I want you to tell me, and that is where the money is. Please. Or *bitte* if you prefer. We know who you are and what you have been. You will not spend this money. You are making a grave mistake, Mr. Busch. A grave mistake."

The other stood silent, the sweat rolling down his pale cheeks, his shirt and jacket soaked. Am I making a mistake? Quite possibly; it won't be the first, nor the last. But what could one do? Whom could one trust? In New York these past three years, it had seemed simple, necessary, even — my God! — romantic. But no, he thought with finality, I am not making a mistake; it would be too useless. He saw the captain's eyes and knew the ordeal had run its course, but there was no feeling of exultation or even relief. He was only conscious of the oppressive heat and a slight feeling of nausea.

Da Silva suddenly swiveled about, staring at the noisy fan with distaste, as if it represented in its mechanical sickness

the malaise of the world in which he was forced to work and struggle.

“All right, Mr. Busch. The money is not on your person nor in your luggage; that much is certain. Whoever you passed it to, either on the plane, or en route, or in the customs shed, will be found. It will not be passed back to you. Or we will be there when it is.” He paused in thought, shook his head sadly. “You would be well advised to turn the money in to us and return to New York, Mr. Busch.” He eyed the small man before him queringly, shook his head again, and then nodded to the customs official.

“All right, Mr. Busch. You are free to go. But you would be making a sad error to feel that this case is over.”

Now the relief came, flooding him, immediately followed by doubt.

“But my passport?”

Da Silva did not lift his eyes from the scratched desk top before him. His fingers idly followed some of the ancient marks impressed upon the worn surface. “I am afraid I shall have to hold that for the time being.”

But really, this was too much! How could he hope to accomplish anything if he couldn't even pass the simple test of getting through customs with his papers intact? And he might well need his passport for identification or travel. I'm tired, he thought, and sick and old. I'm really old. It was enough to make one cry.

“But I am an American citizen....”

“A naturalized American citizen, Mr. Busch, but still, I admit, under the protection of that embassy. However, I am afraid that we cannot permit you to leave our hospitality without due notice. The law, Mr. Busch, allows us to verify that

article under the Stateside basketball scores. Folding the paper, he carried it to the brighter light at the window to read.

It was headed quite simply, EMBEZZLEMENT SUSPECT IN RIO and read:

New York, Feb. 12 (UPI): Hans Busch, well known in the United States for his frequent anti-Semitic articles and pamphlets, and wanted at present by the New York District Attorney's office for questioning in connection with the recent failure of several importing companies with which he was alleged to be connected, is reported to have left International Airport at Idlewild last night by Pan-American Airways with destination listed on the passenger list as Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Busch, a naturalized American citizen, is suspected of absconding with funds of the Germanic-Atlantic Trading Co. and the Hamburg-Atlantic Import Co., both of New York. While the exact nature of the embezzlement charge has not as yet been revealed, it is rumored that Busch fled with nearly two million dollars in cash.

A high official of the New York Police Department stated last night that Busch is also wanted by Federal authorities for questioning in regard to the recent wave of swastika-painting and synagogue-burning that has swept the eastern part of the United States, as well as cities of both Europe and South America.

It is not known as yet what action can be taken by American authorities should Busch decide, as other American fugitives have recently done, to adopt Brazil as his new home, since as yet there is no extradition treaty between the two countries.

sliver of a steamship ran jauntily for the harbor. Lovely, he thought, oh, lovely!

They cut through a series of tunnels to the open Guanabara Bay, and the full impact of the city was revealed in a breathtaking panorama. From the sky that morning, while circling to land, the tangled pattern of hills and sparkling water had held the latent promise of fulfillment of tourist-agency-poster beauty, but he had been too tired and despondent coming in from the airport to pay proper heed to his surroundings. He faintly recalled the tattered upholstery of the cab, and the fact that the rear seat ash tray was overflowing; other than that the trip from Galeão to the Mirabelle was one blank, a persistent jostling through which his drugged mind had attempted to encompass the tragedy of the lost passport. Now, a few moments away, his passport waited; he refused to consider the strange circumstances of the Embassy call, but gave himself over completely to the view.

To the left and above all, mastering and dominating the sweeping hills that fell in mottled green folds away from it, rose the majestic, sheer face of Corcovado, crowned with the hovering white figure of the Cristo Redemptor guarding in perpetual benevolence the lush vitality of the city below, watching in impersonal piety over the near saints and closer sinners that struggled through life in the sea-fringed valley at his feet. In the clear light of the lowering sun, each gaunt striation of the rocky tower could be distinguished; the mountain seemed to have been thrust out of the sea in some ancient age just for the purpose of eventually holding this calm statue.

And there, across a narrow spit of bay to the right, hovering over the yawning yachts moored in its lengthening shadows, loomed the famous Pão de Açúcar — Sugar Loaf — a huge Gulliver tethered to the land by the puny cables

“Exactly what they were told to say,” Mr. Wilson finished smoothly.

He suddenly felt weary again, conscious of the ridiculous figure he made, standing rigid and short and fat in the center of the room, apparently to be the continuing butt of Captain Da Silva’s sardonic humor. He hated to satisfy the requirements for his baiting; he knew he should march out of the room coldly angry, but the words were out before he could stop them, forced from the depths of his disappointment. “Then there is no Mr. Murray? And I do not get my passport?”

Da Silva laughed. “Sit down, Mr.... ah, Mr. Busch. Of course you get your passport. And of course there is a Mr. Murray, and of course he is the assistant consul here.” He considered the swinging toe of his polished boot, as if suddenly pleased to be its owner. When he looked up his smile was a bit rueful, as if he had been unfairly accused of a breach of manners. “My dear fellow, we would certainly not slip up on a thing like that, particularly in a telephone conversation with the Mirabelle Hotel. After all, we could scarcely use Mr. Wilson’s name, because very few people know that he is attached to this eminent office. And Mr. Wilson, I gather, prefers it just that way. And of course we couldn’t use my name, since I am a visitor here like yourself.” He shrugged as if to say. What could we do? “It may be true that Mr. Murray has had his name taken in vain, at least in the sense that he has no idea your passport was taken away, nor that it is being returned. But then, this is probably the only service to which Mr. Murray has been put in his two years in Brazil.” He rolled his eyes drolly toward a shelf that contained an even row of chromed cups. “Other, possibly, than earning the Embassy several cups in

Da Silva shook his head slowly. "To begin with, it was not easy," he said. "It was not easy at all. But that is not the point. Why should they doubt you? What motive would they have? I am with Interpol, and I am familiar with all of the correspondence. When it was officially decided to refuse help to your group, I asked for leave of absence to work with you as an individual, because I am sure you and your group are right. Of course I investigated. But why should they?"

"Why shouldn't they?"

"No, no! Why should they? My dear Ari, the Nazi group here are more than anxious to believe that a certain Mr. Hans Busch, known for his sympathy to their great cause, is loose in Brazil with two million dollars. Two million dollars, I might point out, which he cannot take home again without embarrassing questions being raised. They will feel sure that they can prevail upon him to share the wealth, either through the force of their common convictions, or through any other means they feel necessary to use. Why should they doubt Mr. Busch? They know who he is; among other things, he is the answer to their constant prayers. Who questions the existence of Santa Claus on Christmas Eve? In July, possibly, but on Christmas Eve?"

He paused and looked at Ari. "No," he went on slowly, "they will not check on Mr. Busch as a person; his cover is safe. However, they will most certainly check in great detail on his two million dollars, you may be sure of that! Although I hope that our meeting this morning helped to convince them on that score."

"Our meeting this morning?" Ari sat up slowly, many things clarifying. "Then that was why, at the airport, this morning ...?"

“That was why indeed.” Da Silva smiled delightedly, his eyes twinkling, his thumb unconsciously stroking his mustache. “I hope you fully appreciate the artistry you witnessed this morning. Yes, the stage lost a great actor when I turned to police work!” His smile faded as he recalled their previous encounter. “Did you pay any particular attention to the customs official who brought you in and searched you? You should have. He doesn’t know it, but he is an old friend of mine, that *miserável!* His name is Gunther, born in Santa Catarina in the South. His father was a schoolteacher there, very pro-Hitler, and I have quite a file on the entire family! Personally, I doubt if the son knows what a Nazi is, but there is no doubt that he is one of their little boys!”

He shrugged and smiled. “Yes, that impromptu scene was played all for his benefit. My God! The way he searched you! You could have been carrying a twenty-eight-inch television set under your coat and he would have managed to overlook it! By now you may be sure that the story of Mr. Busch and his two million dollars is going through channels!”

“But we spoke in English,” Ari objected. “Does he speak —?”

Da Silva snorted. “Don’t worry about that one! He knew what we were speaking about! Ten seconds after he had you in a taxi, I would bet anything he was on the telephone. Mr. Busch and his millions will bring sweet dreams to many foolish people tonight!”

Silence fell while Ari considered this information. His glance traveled from the musing expression on Da Silva’s face to the quiet watchfulness of the nondescript man. He cleared his throat diffidently. “And Mr. Wilson?”

Da Silva shrugged elaborately. “Mr. Wilson? Mr. Wilson is assigned by Interpol to the American Embassy here, where, among his other activities — or nonactivities — he serves as security officer as well. Mr. Wilson is a very good friend of mine for many years. We have gotten into our share of trouble together in the past, and probably will again in the future, but I’m afraid not on this case. On this case, his interest simply seems to be seeing that you do not embarrass the American government. He will be of absolutely no help, but on the other hand, knowing him, I should say that he also will not hinder too much.”

The nondescript man smiled at this. “Now, one moment, Zé...”

“I know.” Da Silva raised one hand languidly. “I know. I understand your position perfectly, as well as the position of your government. You put Nazis in the same category as griffins and unicorns. Once a terrible threat, but fortunately no longer existent.”

Wilson’s smile faded. He studied them both for several seconds, framing his reply. “Mr. Schoenberg holds an American passport issued in a name other than his own.” He lifted his hand, forestalling Da Silva’s protest. “I know that by itself this is neither too serious nor too unusual. But we have to remember, Zé, that Mr. Schoenberg is not in Brazil for pleasure. Our government certainly does not intend to have a duplication of the Eichmann mess if it can help it. Or if we can prevent it.” He thought a moment, looking at Da Silva calmly. “By not hindering you, as you put it, I am actually helping you considerably, and doing it more as a favor to you, Zé, than for any other reason. After all, we are also a part of Interpol, and there is a proper organization for handling war criminals.”

He paused and stared grimly at the other two. "And you?" he asked, directing his question to Da Silva. "How did you ever get involved in a cloak-and-dagger affair like this? You are not a Jew."

Da Silva stared down at the hunched, bitter man on the couch. "I could answer as you answered," he said quietly. "I could simply say, 'I am a Brazilian.' But it wouldn't make sense to anyone except another Brazilian. My dear friend Ari, you don't know Brazil, but when you do you win know why I am involved." He became aware of the unlit cigarette in his hand and flung it into the wastebasket, seating himself at Ari's side in almost the same motion.

"Let me tell you something about Brazilians," he said. "We have never been in concentration camps, and we have never put others in them. And with God's help, we never will." He paused, selecting his words with care. "We Brazilians are foolish, playful, happy, improvident, reckless, gay; what you will. But we are not intolerant." He turned his head to me silent listening man beside him, suddenly feeling strongly the need to be understood. "You see, most of us can't afford to be. My family has been here in Brazil for over two hundred years. My first ancestor who came here, came from Portugal, and went into the interior. Our family started there. It was a long time until these first settlers began bringing their women with them from home. So how much Indian blood do I have? How much Negro, or Dutch? I may be part Jewish for all I know. I haven't the faintest idea!

"Today my family is a known family in Brazil; if you will pardon my lack of modesty, we are a very well-known family, a great family. But can those of us who have the honor to belong to this great family be anti-Indian, for example? Or anti-Negro? Or anti-Dutch?" He laughed

shortly. "We Brazilians are in no position to be anti-anyone! We might very well be cutting our own throats! Do you understand what I am trying to say?"

Ari looked up at him wonderingly. "I think I understand."

"You will understand better when you have been here longer." Da Silva rose, smiling down on the other in compassion. A twinkle appeared in his eyes. "Though I confess," he added slowly, "that my sister would die before she admitted anything but the purest of Portuguese blood in her veins. But even she would never be able to understand discrimination against anyone for race, or color, or religion." He sighed deeply, and changed the subject with that rapidity that never ceased to confuse even his most intimate colleagues. "Well," he said, "that's that! Now let us see where we stand. An, you return to your hotel. It should not be too long before they begin falling over your feet. And I shall be Big Brother, but not to such a degree as to frighten the little men away. We shall see what we shall see!"

"And how will we be able to contact one another?"

Da Silva frowned. "No confidential phone calls from the Mirabelle, my friend Ari! You were put there because an unusual number of their guests seem to come from either Santa Catarina or Rio Grande do Sul. And because if you ask for whiskey in German, you always seem to get the legitimate stuff." He smiled broadly. "I suppose, in the best tradition of cloak-and-dagger, we should have a password.

Something dramatic and unintelligible, like the name Wilson."

Ari got to his feet, smiling, getting into the mood of the game. "Why not the name Murray?"

smaller man's arm in friendship. "They may have followed you from the hotel, and your long delay here would get them wondering. Let them think they missed you." He turned back to Wilson as they walked to the elevator.

"Where would you like to eat?"

"I'm eating alone."

"Practically alone. In fact, if you like, I'll even do all the talking." He winked at Ari, and in a *sotto voce* that carried clearly, added, "I told you he wouldn't hinder us too much!"

“Your pardon, Herr Busch,” said the other apologetically in German. “I am the manager of the hotel.” Ari noted the reddish brush of hair fringing a bald head, the heavy, almost theatrical eyebrows, the square white porcelain blocks of teeth. “I realize that you have had a hard day. I am here to help you. If you wish, I shall make some excuse to the newspaper people.” He paused questioningly, his eyebrows shooting up onto his forehead; Ari could only nod. “Then,” began the manager, but the elevator came to a smooth halt and the doors slid back. They left the wide-eyed operator and turned down the hall. “Then,” continued the other suavely, “if you wish I can have your telephone calls held until tomorrow.”

He leaned forward and inserted a master key in the lock, swinging the door wide for Ari to enter. The light switch was pressed; Ari sank to the bed gratefully. The manager blocked the doorway, looking solicitous. “I realize there will be many who might wish to disturb your, ah ... your vacation,” he said, much as if the words had been forced from him by circumstances unfortunately beyond his control. “I assure you that we will do everything in our power to see that you are not bothered. If you wish it, that is, if you wish it,” he added hastily.

“I would certainly appreciate it,” Ari said, wishing the man would take his teeth and his eyebrows elsewhere so he could lie back against the inviting pillow.

“The dining room now,” said the manager, out of nowhere, rubbing his cheek with one finger and staring at the ceiling in contemplation. “I’m afraid ...” He came to sudden resolution, clarifying his *non sequitur*. “If the Herr might care to dine with me in my private apartment ...?”

not of the police, might be, he thought. Well, we shall soon see. At least we are on our way; the three years of preparation will soon prove themselves to have been useful, or they shall soon prove their tragic waste. He was pleasantly reassured by the thought of Da Silva and Wilson; one thing, he was no longer alone. He smiled at the thought and closed his eyes. A faint breeze whispered through the room; he slept.

“Yes,” Mathais said, answering Ari and paying no attention to the sudden flush that appeared on Gunther’s face at this interruption, “Rio is beautiful, but it is also hot. São Paulo, now ...” He puffed majestically; Gunther subsided sullenly. “Do you know São Paulo? A pity. Now, should you be thinking of going to São Paulo, perhaps I can be of assistance. Hotels, for example ...”

“I have been thinking possibly of getting an apartment,” Ari said idly. He smiled at Mathais. “No criticism of hotels, you understand, but ... You see, it is possible that I may stay in Brazil for a while.” He took them into his confidence with a diffident smile; they nodded.

“In Rio?” Gunther asked.

Ari shrugged. “If it is always this hot, maybe São Paulo ...”

“On this I can definitely help you,” Mathais said positively, “I happen to have a friend in São Paulo, a man of much substance. Actually, he is —” Gunther shot him a glance — “a man of great importance. I am sure he could be most useful to you.”

Ari nodded thankfully. So São Paulo seemed to be the headquarters; it was good to know. One step forward, at the least. “You are most kind,” he said, wiping his ashes into the tray at his elbow with precision. “When I am ready to go I shall let you know, yes? However —” he shrugged — “for the next few days I believe I shall relax and enjoy your Rio de Janeiro. It is beautiful; I should like to see all of it.”

The telephone rang as he finished speaking; he looked askance at Mathais. “It must be for me,” the manager said worriedly, lifting the receiver. “I left definite instructions ...” He listened to the voice at the other end with a faint frown on his face. “For you,” he said, handing the instrument to

Gunther with a touch of surprise. Ari watched them both; they seemed quite honestly perturbed by the call.

Gunther was listening intently. A faint buzz at the other end could be heard clearly as the caller spoke. The customs official replied rapidly in Portuguese and then listened with concentration to the answer his words had invoked. He nodded to the instrument as if the caller were there in person, spoke a few words more in tense interrogation, listened, and slowly replaced the receiver on the hook.

"I'm afraid I must go," he said, eying Ari with a strange mixture of caution and respect. "There has been some trouble at the airport."

"Trouble?" Mathais cried. "What trouble? An accident?"

"No; a robbery."

"A robbery? The, ah ... the thieves escaped?"

For seconds Gunther withheld his reply, looking at Ari with smiling speculation. Then with no inflection at all, he said, "Yes. They escaped."

"A shame," Ari said, arising and smiling with relief. "A shame. I am most sorry that you must go, but I understand. ..."

"I will go down with you," the manager said to Gunther, also rising and straightening the creases in his trousers carefully. "Besides, it is very late, yes? I am sure that Herr Busch must be most tired of our company by this time." His toothy smile robbed his words of either offense or meaning.

Ari bowed slightly from the waist. "It was a wonderful meal," he said, happy to be honest. "I thank you very much. You must be my guest another time." He puffed smoke rapidly from his cigar to demonstrate both his enjoyment and his sincerity.

Mathais shrugged. "At the moment, that is not important." He got to his feet and replenished the glasses. He raised his in a toast. "To two million dollars!" He shook his head in profound admiration and drank. He set his glass down and turned to Gunther. "You will let the people in São Paulo know?"

"I'll call them tomorrow. I don't know if the boss is there; I think he is traveling in the South. But in any event he should be back by the end of the week." He sipped his glass. "I'll call tomorrow." He paused, wondering. "Do you think he'll stay in Brazil?"

"Who, Busch? Of course he'll stay in Brazil," Mathais said positively. "Where else would he go? There aren't many places left with no extradition these days. And also, he can't keep taking his money in and out of countries. He was lucky this time. No; hell stay. He came to stay; I'm sure of that."

"In Rio?"

"Or São Paulo. It really makes no difference. Two million dollars! It is what we have needed!" He looked across at Gunther. "You will call São Paulo?"

"I said I would." There was resentment in the tone; the resentment of the unappreciated.

"Just don't forget to," Mathais said rudely. He stood up, yawning deeply, his entire attitude indicating that the discussion was at an end. "Well," he said, seeing the other still sitting and drinking, "Drink up!" Gunther swallowed his brandy hastily and got to his feet, barely suppressing his indignation. Mathais waited impatiently until the other had left, still muttering; then he closed the door softly behind the departing man. "Two million dollars," he said to himself with

a smile as he went into his bedroom. “Two million dollars
...!”

privileges, you could afford to drink a better brand of brandy than this.”

“Zé,” Wilson said, paying no attention to Da Silva’s remark, “are you honestly convinced that there is a real conspiracy here in Brazil to rebuild the Nazi party?”

“Wilson,” Da Silva said, raising his eyebrows in mock surprise, “you are changing the subject.” He studied his glass again. “Now, with PX privileges, if I had been so lucky as to be born an American, I would get Remy Martin. Or, if they were out of it ...”

“Zé!” Wilson said in a dangerous tone.

“My dear Wilson,” Da Silva said, pretending amazement. “The unicorns, you recall? The griffins? Just this afternoon, you wanted no part of this operation.”

“That’s right,” Wilson said, his voice slightly tinged with bitterness. “I didn’t want any part of it. But who dragged me in? You did! So now at least answer my question. And seriously. Are you honestly convinced that there is a conspiracy in this country to rebuild the Nazi party?”

“All right.” Da Silva sat up. “You want an honest answer, here it is. Yes, I am. I am convinced. Completely.” He thought a moment before continuing. “Let me put it to you this way: I won’t say that the rebuilding could be termed a rebirth of the Nazi party, in the sense that the Nazi party is the same National Socialist German Worker’s party of years ago. But as far as I am concerned, it comes to the same thing. This group has the same aims, the same methods, and therefore to me they represent the same danger.” He put his glass down almost violently; Wilson recognized the signs of his friend’s conviction. He leaned back in silence, waiting for the revelations he knew would come.

nephew. By Captain Erick von Roesler himself, speaking, apparently, in the name of the SD.”

“Colonel,” Wilson interrupted, almost automatically.

“In 1939, captain. In any event, it appears that this Goetz was not much in favor of either the program or the personalities of the Third Reich, and he stormed out of the meeting. And later he told me all about it, as well as telling me who was present at the time.”

Wilson stirred in his chair. “And just when did he tell you all this?”

“In 1952.”

“And why had he waited so long?”

“I can only tell you what he told me. He said that old von Roesler was his oldest friend; that he was sure that the old man had nothing to do with the meeting, other than providing the meeting place, and he was sure that even this had been forced on him. The two of them, Goetz and the old von Roesler, had come to Brazil together from Germany in the early twenties, he said. When the old man died, he came up to Rio and told me the whole story. He had simply waited until there could be no repercussions against his friend.”

“And what was the meeting about?”

Da Silva set his glass down slowly, and then looked Wilson directly in the eye. “The meeting,” he said slowly, “was to form a Nazi party group in Brazil.”

Wilson threw up his hands involuntarily. “My dear Zé,” he said, controlling a smile with an effort. “You have to remember that this was far from uncommon in those days. They did the same thing in almost every country in the world.”

Da Silva nodded his head. "I know. But most of the groups they formed in those days were quickly broken up. Or were broken up later, either during or after the war." He looked at Wilson speculatively. "This group never was. Remember that. But let me tell you the rest of the story." He lit another cigarette from the end of the first, and continued.

"I made inquiries, of course, but thirteen years is a long time. There was no indication that the nephew had ever returned to Brazil; when the old man finally died in 1952 the property was sold to the neighbor who had the next farm, and joined to that fazenda. A neighbor, by the way, who was also present at that meeting."

Wilson interrupted. "What happened to the money from the sale? Who got it?"

"It was banked in Switzerland in the name of a niece, Monica von Roesler."

"And has the money ever been taken out?"

Da Silva shook his head. "That we have never been able to find out. The bank wouldn't say, and we can't force them to tell us. But it really isn't important; the farm didn't bring any great price, and with the depreciation in the *cruzeiro* since then, nobody will ever get rich on it. However, let me tell you why I think this meeting in Brazil was different from the meetings that we both know were held in many countries at that time for the same purpose."

Wilson raised his eyebrows questioningly.

"It was some of the people who were at the meeting. And remember what I said before; this is one group that was never broken up." He sat up straighter, ticking the names off on the fingers of one hand.

meant to bar Jews, and it failed. You may also recall his support for the various shirt groups that have sprung up over the years. A man making an honest mistake?" He smiled bitterly. "Well, possibly. I won't say no. But I also won't forget that he was at that meeting back in 1939." He switched hands and continued counting as Wilson looked thoughtful.

"Six. A man named Johann Lange, from Rio Grande do Sul ..." He smiled again. "Familiar? You remember his name? That's right; he was the one who supported Stroessner not so long ago. His ranch comes right up against the Paraguayan border. We've had an eye on him for a long time. Not all of his house guests come equipped with entry visas for Brazil." He dropped his hands. "True, one thing may not have anything to do with the other, but the fact remains that he was another one at that meeting. Plus, of course, Captain Erick von Roesler himself, in person." He looked up suddenly, his eye gleaming. "Not an imitation. Anyway, that's the lot. What do you think?"

Wilson sipped his cognac, his brow furrowed. "You never mentioned this before," he said.

"We never discussed it before. If you want to see the complete dossier on each and every one of them, I have it in my office safe. But for what I need, I also have it here." He tapped his forehead significantly.

"Well, there is no doubt that it is interesting," Wilson said slowly, "but scarcely conclusive. The fact that people were at a meeting over twenty years ago doesn't prove to me that they are organized for a conspiracy today."

"In looking for an organization that is functioning in Brazil today," Da Silva said, leaning forward in utter seriousness, "we can scarcely overlook the fact that an organization

negligently, and then gracefully shot through an opening into a cross street. The pressure was renewed on Ari's arm, enough to constitute an unspoken warning. "Just sit still, Mr. Busch," the hard-faced man said quietly. They pulled around the block and once again eased into the stream of traffic on Avenida Atlantica, this time heading south.

At the corner of Rainha Elizabeth the cab pulled abruptly to the right, slowing down until it was almost stopped. A waiting figure tore open the rear door and shoved his way into the back seat, crowding Ari and his captor to one side. The driver swung around a cab that had started to slow down ahead of them, and picking up speed, headed down Rainha Elizabeth in the direction of Arpoador and the wide beach road leading south out of the city.

"Well, well," said the newcomer, twisting around in his seat to get a good look at Ari. "So you finally got him, eh?" He was a husky, deeply tanned young man in his late twenties; an open sport shirt with sleeves rolled up to the shoulders revealed massive arms.

"Finally is right," said the other grimly. "Four days we waited!"

Ari squirmed in his seat, feeling it was time to assert himself, to discover what was going on. "Now see here ..." he began, attempting to sound more assured than he felt; but a sudden increase in the pressure made him swallow his words in a gulp of pain.

"When we want you to talk, you'll talk," said the hard-faced man beside him viciously. He leaned forward to the driver again, never relinquishing Ari's arm. "Out toward Gávea, Avram," he said. "The beach road to Leblon, and then the Avenida Niemeyer. When we get to Gávea I'll tell you where to turn off. I know just the place." He turned back to

Ari. They were rolling along the broad palm-lined highway, well within the speed limit. The driver, Avram, was humming a little tune; to any passing car they must have presented a picture of three friends out to take the air on a hot night, or on their way to a beach bar for a late drink.

“Hans Busch!” The hard-faced man savored the pleasant wonder of having this man in his hands. “Mr. Hans Busch! You know, Mr. Busch, there used to be a story I heard some time ago when I was much younger; a story you probably know and laughed at years ago. About an old Jew with a big nose and a long beard, named Goldberg. This Goldberg goes to a judge and wants to change his name to O’Brien. The judge agrees and changes the old man’s name from Goldberg to O’Brien. Then, a week later, the old man is back to see the judge. This time he wants to change his name from O’Brien to Kelly. And the judge asks him why, and the old Jew says, ‘Well, every time people ask me my name and I say it’s O’Brien, they look at me funny and say, “What was it before?”’” His tone was quite conversational, but the grip on Ari’s arm tightened slightly. “Let me ask you the same question, Mr. Busch. What was your name before it was Busch?”

The cold feeling of panic that Ari had forcefully contained during the first confused moments of the ride suddenly came flooding back. What was this? Who were these people? What did they want with him? How could they have known that Hans Busch was not his real name? Was everything to be lost again, now, at this point, when it was going so well? Why, he cried to himself in silent despair, why did I ever get so far ahead of Da Silva’s man who was following me?

“We’re talking to you, Mr. Busch,” Davi said gently, although there was nothing gentle about the heavy arm he placed

over the back of the seat and about Ari's thin neck. "It's only polite to answer."

"Who are you ...?" Ari had trouble getting the words out; his voice broke, he forced the words again past the obstruction in his throat. "Who are you ... and what do you want of me?"

Davi laughed. "Us? Who are we? We have lots of names. Which one would you want?" The smile faded, he looked at Ari coolly. "As far as you are concerned, you can think of us as the Bad Guys."

Moises, the heavy-handed man holding Ari's arm in the same tight grip, chuckled unpleasantly. "Who are we? We're some of the remnants you people failed to stuff into an oven some years ago. We're a few that you overlooked. That was your mistake, and I'm afraid you're going to pay for it!"

The driver leaned backwards, speaking over his shoulder. "You want to know who we are? I'll tell you. We're what you people call terrorists. But don't worry about it. Some of our own people call us terrorists, too." He laughed. "So if we are terrorists, prepare yourself for some terror, Mr. Busch!" He swung his attention back to his driving, chuckling at his own humor.

"We are going to kill you, Mr. Hans Busch," Davi said quietly, conversationally. "We are going to take you out of the city, away from everything, and in the dark we are going to kill you. In the dark, out of the sight of people; in the dark, where things like you should be lulled, we are going to kill you!"

"But before we kill you, Mr. Busch," said Moises, in the tone of one who insists on keeping to the agenda, "you are going to answer the question I asked you a while ago. Who are you, Mr. Busch?" He tightened his grip again, and turned to

fingers reached inside his shirt and came out holding a sharp knife that glittered faintly in the moonlight.

“All right, Mr. Busch,” he said softly. “This is the last time we ask you....”

Chapter 10

When the taxi that picked Ari up swung across traffic, a battered cab behind it made the same turn. The driver of this second cab was busy talking to himself; from the street it must have appeared that he was repeating the retorts he should have thought of when he argued with his last passenger. Happier people on the street may have thought he was only singing to himself. Actually, he was speaking into a small microphone mounted in the horn ring of the car.

“A 1948 Chevrolet taxi, black,” he was saying. “Commercial license number 108-02-44. State of Guanabara. It has one taillight out. That’s for identification if I should lose them.” A small red light glowed on the dashboard; he flipped a switch.

“Don’t lose them,” said a harsh voice, distorted by the apparatus. “Which way are they going?” The red light disappeared.

“They went around the block. We’re back on Atlantica again, now, heading south. They’re about three cars ahead.” The red light glowed.

“Don’t let them spot you.” There was a few moments’ silence, then the distorted voice came back on. “I’ll make it to Jardim de Allah; I should be there in about five minutes. Pick me up at the corner of the ocean road and the canal.” The light disappeared.

“But what if they turn off before then? Or stop someplace?” He flicked the switch.

of them; Wilson handled the wheel expertly. "Just don't lose them," Da Silva muttered, almost to himself.

"I won't lose them," Wilson said; but he spoke too soon. They came around a sharp bend in the road to find their way blocked by a large bus discharging passengers; traffic in the other direction prevented their squeezing past. Their brakes squealed as they plowed to a stop; they sat in fuming silence as passengers slowly descended, burdened by age, children and bundles. The driver was in conversation with a passenger who had gotten off, but who maintained his grip on the hand rail as he talked. Wilson blasted his horn; the bus driver glanced back impersonally and continued talking. Another more vicious blast caused the driver to say something to his friend; they both looked back and laughed. Da Silva was opening the door when the driver of the bus waved goodbye to his friend casually and slowly put his machine into motion. With a curse, Wilson shot around him, stamping on the accelerator.

The road ahead was clear of traffic. They swung around the curves, weaving dangerously, but the tail lights they had been following were no longer in sight. Da Silva sat in grim silence, gripping the door handle with a hand of iron, staring rigidly ahead into the empty darkness.

There was a fork at the bottom of the hill where the Avenida Niemeyer came spiraling down from the rock. The leg to the right swung off in a wide curve that followed the foot of the mountain away from the ocean; the left fork followed the beach, then swung away, coming back once again to parallel the ocean. "Left," Da Silva said briefly, scanning the road ahead. And as Wilson swung the wheel, he added, "The other just goes back over the pass into town. They wouldn't take that."

They came around a curve past the Gávea Golf Club, the tires whining, shooting between the high hedges that lined the road. The club was dark except for a watchman's light; high on the mountains above, lights glimmered from a ledge where the Canoas Night Club perched. Wilson slowed down as they rolled into the Praça São Conrado, and Da Silva, seeing a moving light on the road above, came to a sudden decision. "Up towards Canoas," he said quickly; Wilson turned up the hill without stopping, accelerating hard.

Ahead of them the tail lights grew brighter; they were gaining rapidly. Suddenly Wilson slammed on the brakes, squealing to a halt. "That's a new car, double tail lights," he said briefly. He swung the car about, braked, reversed, and headed down the hill again. "Those aren't our boys."

"Damn!" Da Silva said with feeling. They paused at the Praça again, the engine panting as if anxious to be off on the chase again. Da Silva stared thoughtfully at the road that wound off and disappeared toward Joa and the Barra de Tijuca; and then back again to the darkened highway leading back to Rio. Wilson waited patiently, his hands poised alertly on the steering wheel.

"One chance!" Da Silva said suddenly. "Start back toward town. But go slowly." Wilson put the car into gear, turned left around the traffic island of the Praça, and began retracing their path. "The next right," Da Silva said suddenly, and Wilson swung the wheel easily. They left the highway, following a dirt road that led to the beach. They bumped along slowly; at the end the road curved right, bordering the sand of the beach. The shadows of parked cars well spaced could be seen in the dusky moonlight.

“Lovers’ lane,” Da Silva said shortly. He stared ahead. “Just one chance that they may have pulled in here.” He looked ahead through the tunnel of their headlights. “Drop down to your parking lights. Drive along slowly, as if you were looking for a place to neck.” Wilson leaned forward and pushed a button. Da Silva eased his revolver from a shoulder holster and slipped it into his jacket pocket. He opened the glove compartment and withdrew a flashlight which he quickly flipped on and off to test. They slowly passed several cars whose occupants paid no attention to the invasion of their privacy. The road was ending. Then, beyond the other cars, and at a considerable distance, one more car stood, its nose pointed toward the sand. It was a black Chevrolet, and even in the weak glow of their parking lights they could see the silhouettes of more heads inside than was customary for lovers’ lane parkers.

“Luck!” Da Silva said with deep satisfaction. “Don’t slow down; not more than you are now. Pull past them and turn around and come back slowly. When we are just opposite them, cut the lights altogether and stop. Quickly!” He took the revolver from his pocket, gripping it loosely; his other hand held the flashlight. Wilson maneuvered the car about expertly, and started back. “Now!” Da Silva said almost viciously, and in one motion he was out of the car and had swung open the rear door of the other.

“Police,” he said briefly, coldly, flashing the light over the startled faces inside, in no way indicating the satisfaction he felt at seeing the white face of Ari wedged between the other two in the back seat. His revolver was conspicuous in his other hand; his voice was the hard voice of authority. “What’s going on here?”

There was a frozen silence. “Well?” Da Silva flicked the revolver up ominously.

no outcry, nor voiced complaint. There was only the sudden gunning of a motor as its driver decided to leave hurriedly.

Da Silva took a revolver from one man before him, and a large hunting knife from another. Stepping to the deserted car, he swung his flashlight about the interior, and then, leaning down, he picked a sharp dagger-type knife from its place of concealment between the floor mat and the base of the rear seat. He slipped the weapons into his jacket pocket and stepped back, breathing heavily.

“Just talking, eh?” he said in deep sarcasm. “Well, we’re all going back to town, back to the *delegacia*. Just to convince you all that I’m really a police officer! And there you’ll get all the chance you want to talk, I promise you!” He paused, staring at them coldly. “And just to see that there is no funny business, suppose we split you big talkers up!” He grasped Ari roughly by the arm, tossing him toward the car in which Wilson sat watching with interest. “The rest of you get into your car and drive ahead of us. Slow. Remember, I said slow! There will be a gun on you all the way. When we get to Leblon, stop your car and stay inside. The first time the door opens, somebody gets shot.” He looked at them icily. “Understand? All right; let’s go!”

He threw Ari roughly into the back seat of his car and climbed in behind. Wilson’s gun remained fixed on the others while they climbed back into their car with angry faces, turned the car about, and began the bumpy ride back to the highway. There was no attempt on the part of the leading car to speed or escape. At the highway they turned right, creeping toward the entrance to the Avenida Niemeyer. Where the road led up the spiraled rise to the Niemeyer, cut in rock. Da Silva leaned forward close to Wilson’s ear; he slowed momentarily, and the first car, still moving slowly, disappeared around the first curve of the

ledged road. With a sharp swing, Wilson turned his car toward the fork that led over the pass and stamped heavily on the accelerator. In a minute they had sped into the hills.

Da Silva returned his revolver to the shoulder holster and threw the flashlight onto the front seat. "And now," he said, leaning back comfortably and lighting a cigarette. "Just what in the devil was that?" He turned toward Ari, whose face was drained of color, and whose hands were trembling uncontrollably.

"They were going to kill me," Ari whispered in a voice wound tight with hysteria; a crazy light flickered in his eyes. "They were going to kill me!"

"I doubt that," Da Silva said calmly, attempting by his relaxed manner to ease the terror that lay so openly on the other's face. He inhaled deeply and let the smoke waft gently from his nostrils. "I doubt that."

"No. No! They were really going to kill me!" Ari looked numbed, as if he were going to cry without knowing exactly why. He looked down at his twisted hands, almost whispering to himself. "They were going to kill me!"

"Relax," Da Silva said kindly. "Why should they want to kill you?"

Ari looked at him, his face twitching with emotion. "They were Jews," he said miserably. "They were Jews! Israeli Jews."

"*What?*"

Ari nodded. "Israeli Jews. They were going to kill me. Jews ...!" His voice died away in the unfairness of it all.

Da Silva looked thoughtful. "That's one thing we hadn't counted on. You didn't say anything?"

Hysteria took over. "What could I say? Do you think they would have believed anything I said? Me? They would believe me?" He twisted his fingers tightly together in shock, shaking his head drearily. "They wouldn't believe me. They were going to kill me."

"Well, they didn't kill you," Da Silva said, brutally trying to bring the little man out of his crisis of nerves. "And I doubt if they will try again!" He puffed calmly on the cigarette. "Did they ask any questions?"

"They wanted to know who I was." He was almost sobbing. "They seemed to think I was somebody else ... oh, not Ari Schoenberg, but somebody in the Nazi party. They were going to make me tell ..." He looked up at Da Silva in blank-eyed wonder. "What could I have told them?"

Da Silva reached over and patted his shoulder tenderly. "It's all over," he said, smiling in a friendly fashion. "It's all over. Don't think about it. You're safe. But," he added slowly, watching Ari out of the corner of his eye, trying to gauge the proper subject to relieve the terror that lay waiting to explode in the other's eyes, "it does look as if we had better move faster than we have. Mr. Busch seems to have more enemies than we counted on." He looked at the little man shrewdly. "No contacts as yet?"

The startling blue eyes looked at him dumbly. "No what?"

"Contacts." The tall, saturnine man smiled at him quickly, as if sharing a secret. He leaned forward again, patting the trembling leg. "Talk about it. What's happened this past week? Tell me. You'll feel better."

Ari looked at the tanned face before him, pulling his thoughts together. In a daze he began to describe his activities during the past four days. As he talked, he found to his surprise that the tension seemed to ease; he actually

found himself considering their problem rather than the cold horror he had felt at the possibility of facing death at the hands of his own people. "In São Paulo," he heard himself say. "They want me to meet somebody in São Paulo. I was planning on going there in a few days."

"They were probably waiting until you became less of a celebrity," Da Silva said shrewdly. "Or possibly waiting until somebody returned who was away traveling." He thought a while and then turned to the driver. "Better drop me off at my car," he said. "Well try to speed things up." He turned to Ari. "Do you feel all right for more action tonight?"

Ari nodded dumbly. "I feel better."

"Good. We'll speed things up, then. I'll take you to your hotel personally. When we get there, let me do the talking." He turned back to their driver. "Jardim de Allah, then."

For the first time, Ari noticed that their driver was the nondescript man he had met at the American Embassy.

"Mr. Wilson," he said in surprise. "I can't thank you enough ___"

"Thank Zé," Wilson said, but there was a compassion in his voice that surprised the old man. Wilson turned past the Jockey Club and headed for the Jardim de Allah, his eyes smiling kindly at Ari in the rear-view mirror.

speed. A huge signboard advertising motor oil flashed past; beneath a picture of a grinning automobile thirstily drinking from a golden can, an arrow pointed in the direction he was traveling. "São Paulo," said the arrow, "400 kilometers." The driver nudged his companion sharply and the other slowly opened his eyes.

"My dear Zé," said Wilson, straightening with a deep yawn and eying Da Silva with undisguised rancor. "You drag me out of a comfortable bed at some ungodly hour, frighten me half to death by having shaved off your mustache, throw me in your car with no explanation whatsoever, and then you don't even have the decency to let me catch up a bit on my sleep!"

"There is a time for everything," Da Silva said brightly. Without his mustache he appeared years younger; his strong white teeth flashed in a sudden smile. "When I picked you up, Wilson, my son, I was in the midst of a dramatic escape. Even you will admit that that is certainly no time for fancy speeches and lengthy explanations. Now, however, that we have foiled the dastardly intentions of the minions of law and order, and are well free of their foul clutches, other times have come!"

"Like the time for explanations?" Wilson asked curiously.

Da Silva laughed gayly, shaking his head. "Like the time to appreciate nature. Look at the sunlight glistening on the waves below; notice the beautiful cloud banks ahead of our brave airplane! Think of the drink we shall take together at Belém, think of the wonders we shall see tonight in Dakar, and the food we shall eat tomorrow in Paris! Wilson, my friend, there is no place in the world to appreciate nature like Paris!"

Da Silva looked at him, his face a mask, a brown granite block with flat eyes that looked at Wilson and through him, far beyond. "I don't care," he said flatly. "I'm a man, too. Under more important orders. From much higher up. That's the assignment I can't leave."

He turned back to the wheel abruptly, concentrating on his driving. They stopped once again for gasoline at São José dos Campos, in the State of São Paulo, caught a quick sandwich while the car was being serviced, and left as soon as it was ready. The sun was high now, past the meridian, and there was no longer a breeze; the area was sweltering. Wilson had thrown his jacket into the rear seat of the car, and now loosened his tie and unbuttoned his shirt collar.

"You might at least have let me take along a clean shirt," he said resentfully.

"They sell shirts in São Paulo," Da Silva said dryly. Then he smiled. "Or you might stop by and visit the Deputado Strauss. He ought to have quite a collection of shirts. All colors."

He leaned back and accelerated the car. They roared on toward São Paulo.

The voice waved this aside with grandiose disdain. "There was no need for a letter, really. While I have not had the pleasure of meeting the Herr Busch in person, I am more than familiar with the Herr in the ways that count! You must have lunch with me. Today, yes?" There was a pause. "I shall come by your hotel in thirty minutes, yes? It is all right?"

"You are most kind, but really, I could meet you —"

"Nonsense! It is my pleasure to pass your hotel."

"If you wish it, then it is my pleasure, too."

"I do wish it. Thirty minutes, then, yes? *Auf wiedersehen.*"

"*Auf wiedersehen.*"

It occurred to Ari as he hung up and started for the bathroom that he had forgotten to mention the name of his hotel to the Deputado, and for an instant he started back toward the telephone. Then he stopped, smiling grimly. The Deputado, he was suddenly sure, not only knew his hotel and room number, but probably the size of his hat. He turned back to the bathroom.

Thirty minutes later he was standing at the large glass window of the lobby when a long Cadillac drew up at the entrance. He walked to the front of the marquee as a chauffeur sprang down to open the rear door. A heavy-set blond giant, of indeterminate age, leaned forward from the back seat, waving him in. "Herr Busch?"

He smiled and entered the car. They shook hands as the driver put the Cadillac into gear and smoothly entered traffic. Ari reached into the breast pocket of his jacket, producing his letter of presentation, handing it to his companion. Strauss stuffed the envelope into his pocket negligently, smiling.

monotonous and depressing. Strauss descended and held the door back for Ari.

“Please,” he said. “I should like you to come too, if you do not mind.” Ari got down, wondering, and followed the large man into the building.

In the gloom of the interior he could see several flatbed presses, two hand-operated card presses, and the usual clutter of the small job-printing shop. Seen from the inside the building seemed even smaller; the ancient and battered machinery filled it. Rickety cabinets holding type leaned drunkenly against one wall; tables for pulling proofs and pounding forms were placed haphazardly about. The shop looked as if it had not been swept for weeks; rubbish lay under the tables and around the machines.

A young boy in a filthy apron stood feeding a hand press under the single bulb that gleamed faintly in the room. His eyes were half closed against the fumes of a cigarette pasted in one corner of his mouth, and his arms swayed in automatic rhythm to the slapping of the platen. He paid no attention to his visitors. They stood in silence watching this operation for a moment, then Strauss touched Ari on the arm and they turned aside into a small office set under a stairway.

Strauss reached up to the wall and switched on a light; a naked bulb dangling from a twisted cord lit the messy room with brutal clarity. It was a tiny office with barely room to move about in. A roll-top desk covered with papers filled one corner; another table littered with more papers and magazines took up most of the remaining space. The calendars on the wall were stained and crooked; an old typewriter leaning askew with one corner caught on a pile of catalogues completed the inventory of debris; it was all indescribably shabby.

Strauss sat down heavily in a plain chair and motioned Ari to the wobbly armchair before the desk. He waved his arms about in disgust, watching Ari under firm eyebrows. "You see it," he said quietly.

"I beg your pardon?"

"I said, 'You see it.' Our propaganda center. We are supposed to work with this; to produce results with this." He shook his leonine head fiercely. "If it were not so tragic, it would be a joke."

Ari sat silent, afraid of not knowing what to say. His eyes passed over the pitiful confusion of the room and returned to the other. Strauss leaned forward impressively.

"Herr Busch, I am not like the others," he said, his eyes fixed unwaveringly on the small, elderly man balanced precariously on the edge of the swivel armchair. "I speak out with what I have on my mind. I know who you are and the work you have done. I am proud of the work you have done. And I am also envious of the work you have done. But, Herr Busch —" a thick finger sprang in the air for emphasis — "if you had been forced to work as we have, you could not have accomplished what you did!"

Ari gazed about him. "It is not much, it is true."

"Not much? It is nothing! It is worse than nothing!" The thick hands scrabbled through the papers that cluttered the table until they unearthed a trade magazine for the graphic arts. He picked it up, rimed through the pages to an advertisement offering a complete, modern printing plant for sale and slapped the folded page down in front of Ari. "Do you see this? This is what we were promised!" He jerked his hand contemptuously toward the clacking press outside. "This is what we have! And have had for ten years! It is not possible!"

“Herr Busch,” he said slowly, “I understand exactly what you mean. I also am no fool. I do not know what you would require in the way of proof. ...” He thought a bit. “Herr Busch. You recall a certain Captain Da Silva?”

“Yes, of course I remember Captain Da Silva. Too well.”

Strauss smiled. “Well, at this moment he is on his way to Paris. He was too curious; and also he was becoming a nuisance. With my influence, I was able to arrange another assignment for him. Do you believe me?”

Ari sighed. “I’m afraid you do not understand me, Herr Strauss. If you say you arranged a transfer for this Captain Da Silva, of course I believe you.” He paused. So Da Silva had been taken out of the game! A cold feeling of being alone swept him momentarily, but he forced it away.

“However, I must continue to be frank. You have told me nothing so far that would lead me to give any money to you or to whatever group you represent. Please believe me. I am not trying to be either stubborn or insulting. I am only being careful. And honest.”

Strauss sat with his big head bowed in deep thought. Finally he looked up. “Herr Busch, I must discuss this with others, you understand.”

“As you wish.” Ari rose slowly, brushing his lapel. “And now, lunch?”

Strauss lumbered to his feet, bulking in the tiny office. He leaned over and picked up the trade magazine, still folded to the beautiful advertisement of the modern printing plant. “Should I bring this along?” he asked, looking at Ari questioningly.

“I don’t think so,” Ari said, smiling coldly. “No, I really don’t think so.”

Strauss looked at Monica helplessly; she kept her eyes averted. "I have no idea, but ... Take it from him? How?"

The eyes facing him lost their madness momentarily, but not their hardness. The voice almost sneered. "It is a shame you spent the war years in Brazil. If you had been in the Fatherland, you would not have to ask. You would know!"

"I wasn't in the Fatherland; I was here. Following your orders." The resentment in his voice was apparent. He looked at von Roesler blankly. "I still don't know what you want. I know him, and he knows me. How do you suggest we get the money away from him? Kidnap him?"

The tinge of sarcasm was lost on von Roesler; the madness was back. "I do not care how. Kidnap him if you wish. Hold him for ransom." He paused, thinking, then nodded. "It is really an excellent suggestion. It is precisely what you shall do. Kidnap him. Hold him for ransom."

Strauss almost threw his hands up in hopelessness. "I was only —"

"An excellent suggestion." The eyes studied him dispassionately. "You can arrange the necessary people? They must not be anyone connected with our movement."

Strauss sat up straight. "I was not speaking seriously."

There was a sudden vicious gleam of humor in the eyes of the other. "But I am. It was your idea, and I am agreeing with it. You will kidnap him and hold him for ransom. For two million dollars."

"But —"

"It is an order. You can arrange necessary people?"

concerned, I think I know how." She spoke breathlessly, not releasing his arm, pulling it firmly against the warm curve of her full breast. He leaned back passively; she began to explain her idea rapidly.

Chapter 4

Carnival was here; it was only the first afternoon of the insane, gay festival, but already all formality had gone by the board; a wild madness invaded the heavy air, a sense of complete relaxation and to-hell-with-it-allness. Ari sat wedged at a small table in the noisy hotel bar, enjoying an apéritif, completely at ease, smiling broadly at nothing at all, feeling himself to be a part of the swirling mob that engulfed him. Girls in little abbreviated skirts blew confetti in his face; young men with grotesquely painted mustaches and all manner of comic costumes sprayed ether from small pressurized bottles in all directions; from the street outside the open window came the sound of rhythmic syncopated bands, and the shuffling of people dancing, the cry of people singing. Ari sat there in pure enjoyment; what a wonderful people, what a wonderfully mad holiday!

A couple came lumbering happily through the crowded bar; the man was gigantic and dressed in a tight Tyrolean costume of patterned shirt, short breeches, stockings and a small feathered cap; the woman, large herself, was dressed in typical French peasant style, her tilted-eared cap rising high over her golden hair, her blouse pleasantly filled, her full skirts falling in ruffled folds to her sabots. She was pulling the man along behind her boisterously; they bumped through the tables, heading for the bar. They were squeezing past Ari's table when the man suddenly pulled up short, causing the woman to stagger.

“Strauss!” she cried in a half-drunken giggle. “Come on! I want a drink!”

“Herr Busch!” Strauss cried, tightening his grip on the woman’s hand and dragging her back to the table. “What a pleasure!” His eyes were already bright with the effects of drink, and the effects of Carnival spirit. Ari attempted to pull himself to his feet, but the pressure of the crowd was too great. “Jeanne!” Strauss cried. “I want you to meet an old friend of mine!” He looked about. “Here. Take this chair; I will get another!”

The woman sat down at once, immediately reaching over for Ari’s apéritif and drinking it down in one gulp. Strauss swung a chair neatly from beneath the noses of the occupants of the next table and fell into it before they could complain. He enfolded Ari in a great bear hug, calling loudly to the waiter at the same time. Ari was overwhelmed.

“Carnival, Carnival!” Strauss cried in a gay voice. “It is wonderful, no? Yes?” He paused, considering which had been correct, then dismissed the whole thing, remembering his duty. “Herr Busch, this is Madame Richereau. Jeanne, an old friend, Herr Busch.” He spoke in French; they fell into the same tongue. In the cacophony of sound that arose like a wave from all sides, every language of the civilized world could be heard.

“I want a drink!” Madame Richereau’s sudden announcement was made in a belligerent tone. She stared at Ari archly. “You wonder, perhaps, where is M. Richereau? I will tell you; during Carnival, my sweet, we go our separate ways. It is the custom.” She hiccuped gently, then stared at Ari blankly and continued vaguely, “Yes, during Carnival it is the accepted custom....” Then she turned, waving wildly at a waiter and returning her attention

to Ari all in one gesture. "Monsieur Busch, you are cute. Strauss, my sweet, Monsieur Busch must come to my party tonight. I insist. It is an order!"

Strauss lolled back in his tiny chair happily. "Your orders, Madame, are my commands!" He suddenly laughed at the idiocy of this, turning in his chair to Ari for appreciation of the mot.

Ari laughed delightedly. "I should love to come, Madame, but I am afraid that I have no costume."

"No costume? It is of the least!" She dismissed this excuse with a negligent wave of her jeweled hands. "It is nothing! I have at least three left over!" She hiccuped while considering her arithmetic. "No, four. No, no! Three." She turned swiftly even as she spoke, catching the arm of a waiter with predatory skill, and ordered three drinks. Turning back, she blinked at Ari carefully. "Where was I? Oh yes, you want a costume. What would you like to be?" Her head perched to one side, looking at Ari birdlike. "A sultan?" She shook her head. "But I'm afraid that one would be too big; you would drown in it. I know! A woman! A beautiful, sexy, rounded woman!" She collapsed with laughter, clapping her hands. "I have a delicious can-can for you; you will be a riot!"

Ari laughed with her; her sudden guffaw was infectious, booming through the bar. "Please, not as a woman," he said, giggling helplessly. "Anything but that!"

"But you would be lovely as a woman," she said, pouting prettily. "I'm sure you must have beautiful legs." She bent over, peeking beneath the table. Ari continued to giggle.

"I'll take the third," he said, "whatever it is!"

Madame considered this statement and found it puzzling. "The third what?" she said. Enlightenment suddenly came.

“The third costume!” She clapped her hands at her own cleverness, and then her face fell. “But it is a comic prisoner,” she explained sadly, “all striped, like in the penitentiary. Last year everybody had one; this year they may be a trifle *déclassé*.”

“It will do fine. I shall be a comic prisoner,” Ari said, happy for her that the problem had been finally resolved.

Madame Richereau suddenly climbed to her feet, and then mounted her chair, supporting herself with one hand against the chair back, her other hand pointing wildly. “Strauss!” she cried. “Our waiter gave our drinks to that table over there! Call him over! Make him give us our drinks!” She suddenly stepped down from the chair and started plowing her way through the crowd. “If you won’t, I will!” she called back determinedly over her shoulder. Strauss rolled with laughter.

“A character, no?” he said, gasping, wiping his eyes. “Yes?” He thought about it and resolved not to get in that trap again. “And her parties are famous; you will love it!”

“She won’t forget the costume?” Ari asked with an anxious smile.

“She forgets nothing!” Strauss cried. “Except her husband!” He laughed so hard at this that he was forced to bold onto the table for support. Madame fought her way back, gripping a waiter firmly by the arm. “I don’t know what you would do without me,” she said archly as the waiter set their drinks upon the table. She turned to Ari with forced gaiety. “Now don’t forget! Nine o’clock at the Fasano Roof! You must ask for my table!” She swallowed her drink in one gulp without sitting down, leaning on Strauss in a possessive fashion, smiling brightly at Ari. “You’ll have your costume delivered tonight, so don’t worry,” she said. She eyed him

pensively. “Although I still think you would make a delicious can-can girl!”

“No, no! A prisoner will be fine,” Ari said, laughing.

“One thing,” she said, eyeing him critically, “at least it will fit you better.” She turned to Strauss impatiently. “Drink up! We have lots of bars to visit yet.” She waved goodbye to Ari and began leading Strauss away, bellowing with laughter, waving weakly behind him.

Chapter 5

The costume was delivered at eight o'clock that night; Ari had almost given up hope of its arrival. He stood in the bedroom with the door locked and undressed slowly. The long tight sleeves of the costume covered his scarred tattoo mark adequately, but the cuffs were a trifle short and for some reason suddenly worried him. He stripped off the blouse and put on a long-sleeved undershirt with tight cuffs beneath the gaudily striped prison jacket; it was warm, and the ends of the undershirt sleeves extended a bit beyond the uniform, but he felt safer. The rest of the costume followed rapidly; when he was all dressed with the little striped beanie on his head, he stepped before the mirror and reviewed himself critically. He slipped on the small domino mask and studied himself again, suddenly doubling over with laughter. For one night at least, he thought, I shall forget this terrible business and have myself a good time. This time, he said to his image in mock severity, I really don't know who you are. He tapped the striped beanie, firming it at an outrageous angle on his head with comic authority.

He made sure that his wallet was in the rear trouser pocket of the uniform, and then stepped outside into the corridor, locking the door behind himself carefully. He was sure that he would excite no comment in the elevator; going up to his room from the bar he had found himself in the company of a bosomy Pierrot, a chorus girl complete with cigar and mustache, a squat Indian whose accouterments included

twice, once in Rio and once here in São Paulo. The one in Rio can be explained; actually it helped us. But it will be very hard to explain the one in São Paulo.” He shrugged. “This Herr Busch is no fool. One day Strauss asks him for money and he refuses; the next day he is kidnapped. What do you imagine he is going to think?”

“I was against it from the beginning,” Strauss began, but Monica broke into me conversation.

“There is no point in repeating that stupid statement endlessly,” she said with irritation. “It was an idea and it didn’t work. Let’s not talk about it any more.”

“I just want to make sure that we don’t decide to try it again,” Strauss insisted stubbornly.

“Again I agree with Strauss,” Mathais said. “If there should be any more of these attempts, the only thing we will accomplish is to frighten him away from Brazil. He’ll simply leave.”

“And leave the money?” von Roesler sneered.

“He brought the money in, right under our nose, and we don’t know how,” Mathais said boldly, looking von Roesler in the eye. “I’m sure he can take it out again, probably also under our nose, and we still won’t know how he managed.” His glance never wavered. “You all continue to think that Herr Busch is a fool. I know him, and I tell you that he is far from a fool.”

Strauss nodded his head emphatically. “I also know him and I agree. I tried to tell everybody ...” His voice trailed into silence under the withering contempt of Monica’s sideways look.

“All right!” Von Roesler was beginning to lose his temper. The madness that ebbed and flowed in him seemed to be

“Meet him *here*?” The crazed voice was scandalized. “Here? Bring him *here*, when they must be following him every minute, watching every move he makes? Bring him here? Let him lead *them* to this apartment?”

“If you agree to meet him,” Strauss said in a quiet, reasonable tone, “a meeting place that is safe can easily be arranged.”

The mad eyes swung blindly away from them, wandering tragically along the walls, past the heavily draped windows, over the locked door. “I thought my destiny was always Brazil,” he said, speaking in a soft crooning tone to some hidden corner of his brain, the past beginning to swirl like his pipe smoke through the gossamer web of his thoughts. He giggled. “Safe? What is safe?” The insane laughter faded and he looked at them blankly, through them, beyond them. “You know,” he said conversationally, “I had a map on my desk at Buchenwald, a map of Brazil. I looked at it every day, studied it, pored over it. I thought my destiny was here in Brazil. Here. I was sure that my destiny was here.” He sighed, suddenly weary of it all. “And now I find myself locked in a small room, worse than a prisoner....”

“Your destiny *is* in Brazil,” Monica said swiftly, quietly, attempting to bring the wandering mind back into focus. “Here in Brazil. Maybe meeting with Herr Busch is that destiny, Erick.”

“And the meeting place is no problem,” Mathais interposed smoothly without a break, not wishing to allow time for the attention of the other to escape back into the nebulous past. “If you don’t want to meet him here in the apartment, I can easily arrange a suite at one of the hotels here in São Paulo.”

A gleam of sanity briefly returned. The voice hardened. "Not in São Paulo. I will not meet him in São Paulo." He leaned forward, appealing to the intelligence of them all. "Don't you see? They are here in São Paulo. Now. Can't you understand?"

"A suite at the Mirabelle in Rio, then," Mathais said equably, calmly. "You will be safe there."

The gleam once again faded, he seemed to shrink again. "Locked rooms," he murmured faintly. "Always locked rooms...." He looked up pathetically. "Must I meet with him?"

"We need the money," Mathais said quietly.

"We promise you we will arrange a place that is safe from ... from ... from them," Strauss added with embarrassment. Monica sat silent, her fingers twisting, her eyes filling with tears.

"Then I will meet with him!" The figure behind the desk seemed to draw strength from the decision. He looked at them all fiercely. "But not in São Paulo. In Rio!" He stood up abruptly; the weak figure that had sat in his place but a moment before had disappeared to be replaced in an instant by the old Erick von Roesler, Colonel in the justly famed and justly feared SD. They watched this metamorphosis in astonished silence.

He turned to Mathais, the old tone of command strong in his voice. "You will arrange it. Consider yourself in command. You will arrange a place that is safe; not indoors, not in any locked room. I leave it to you to arrange." He turned sharply toward the others, continuing to speak to Mathais. "When all arrangements are completed, you will communicate with Herr Strauss; he will manage to

let me know.” He looked at them coldly; it was dismissal. The meeting was over.

Monica saw them out of the apartment, her eyes bright with tears, her thoughts far away. In the automatic elevator, descending slowly, Strauss finally found words. “You know, of course,” he said absently, “the man is mad. Completely mad.” He turned to Mathais as if seeking support.

Mathais smiled at him icily. “Of course.”

“But ...”

“But we need the money.” The door opened mechanically, depositing them in a deserted lobby. They stepped out.

“But do you think —” Strauss hesitated for words — “do you think that if he meets with Busch he will ... he won’t ... that he’ll act all right?” he finished in a rush.

Mathais looked at him. “Von Roesler is the only one who can convince Busch to part with that money. He’ll act all right. He’ll have to!” He turned toward the door, but Strauss caught his arm.

“How will you get Busch to go back to Rio?”

Mathais smiled grimly. “That will be no problem. Leave it to me. We have all wasted too much time trying to be subtle in this entire affair; I’ll simply tell him the man he wants to contact will meet him in Rio on such-and-such a day.”

Strauss still did not seem to be satisfied. “But a meeting place ... If it isn’t just right, von Roesler may refuse to go.”

Mathais patted him on the arm reassuringly. “Don’t worry about the meeting place,” he said. “I know just the spot. It will be perfect.”

They pushed through the heavy doors and stepped out into the deserted street. In the distance the faint sounds of

cleanse myself of the unhappiness that somehow has followed me throughout this masquerade. When this is finished, it is there that I shall properly say goodbye to the lush grandeur and peaceful beauty of this city.

He sighed and stared back over his shoulder at his still-unpacked bag. Stay there, he said in sudden resolution to his shirts and socks and underwear, to his handkerchiefs and ties, to his extra suit and extra shoes. Stay there and keep yourself company. You are somehow something out of the past, and I'll unpack you when I'm good and ready.

He looked back out of the window, surprised once again at the depth of his restlessness. Am I nervous? he thought. I should actually be happy; the conclusion of this farce is near, we are coming close to the answer that induced this idiotic imposture, this crazy adventure. Am I afraid? He thought of Da Silva off in a foreign country and felt a pang of loneliness sweep him, a faint shock of panic. Yes, he thought, almost with satisfaction at the revelation; yes, I am afraid. But of what I do not know. But I am afraid!

The thought, oddly enough, seemed to calm him instantly, and he returned at once to his bag, dipping into it resolutely. Without an indication of his previous perturbed state of mind, he carefully placed each item in its place in the dresser drawers, and hung his suit neatly on a hanger in the narrow closet.

afterwards, you see, you cannot go. Because afterwards, we are closed.”

Mathais ground his huge teeth together, but maintained an outward calm, albeit a trifle shaky. He thought a moment and decided to try another tack.

“You open at what time?” he asked slowly, speaking with extreme clarity.

The other considered this carefully, and apparently finding nothing incriminating in answering, nodded thoughtfully.

“Quite early,” he said, but added sadly, “of course before we open, no one is allowed.”

“I understand,” Mathais said heavily. “Now; what time do you close?”

“Quite late.”

“The time,” Mathais said, almost gritting his teeth. “What time do you close? The exact hour?”

The second man, who had sat throughout this duel in silence, now decided to come to his partner’s aid. “We close at midnight,” he said.

Mathais gave a vast sigh of relief. “You close at midnight. Then, if I wished to come there with my friends after midnight, there would be no one there.” He quickly raised his hand to forestall the inevitable. “Yes. I know it is closed after midnight. But we would only require someone to run the mechanism — the car. And we would pay for this. We would pay money for someone to stay after hours to run the car.”

The magic word “money” seemed to have the necessary effect; or at least it had some effect. The two fell into a huddled conference, jabbering softly to each other. Mathais waited patiently, convinced that he was on the right track.

“Fine,” Mathais said with satisfaction. “Now see if you can remember this...”

Chapter 3

The brightly lit facade of the Mirabelle Hotel threw its reflected glow upon the empty pavement of the Avenida Atlantica, now damp from the faint sea fog that was slowly rolling in from the rustling ocean lost in darkness beyond the barrier of the sandy beach. It was past midnight, and the traffic had slowed down to a few well-spaced cars hurrying by, seeking to reach home before the full force of the fog swept down and closed off vision. Their tires sucked at the wet pavement hungrily, sounding sticky in the quiet night. The sharp clacking of an occasional pair of high heels patrolling the darkness were the only other sounds.

Parked a block above the Mirabelle and facing north in the direction of the city stood the battered taxi with the mechanically interesting horn ring. Two blocks below the hotel, facing south, a gaily dressed Brazilian lounged at the wheel of a long, low Jaguar. To pass the time the drivers of these two parked cars were talking to each other by radio.

“This is boring,” Wilson said, and his voice reflected his words. His finger toyed with the dashboard switch. “This is the second night in a row; I’m about ready to leave you to your own devices and call it quits.” He paused, and when his voice came back on the air again its tone had livened. “Or possibly I’ll take this taxi racket seriously. I’ve turned down about eight fares so far tonight, but there are three girls coming along now that I think ...”

Da Silva, coming up fast behind, saw both the intention and the accident, but without stopping to investigate he braked to a stop, thrust his Jaguar brutally into reverse, and shot backwards out of the tunnel. A car coming up behind skidded wildly to miss him, and entered the tunnel with its driver looking over his shoulder screaming imprecations. Da Silva paid no attention.

Once clear of the entrance, he swung the wheel sharply to the left and went bouncing over the center strip, coming down heavily over the curb to enter the uptown side of the tunnel with his superchargers roaring. He was fortunate in facing but one lone car hurrying home to Copacabana; this fled to one side with lights flashing and horn echoing hollowly in the enclosed space. Da Silva kept to one side, shooting through the narrow tunnel with his hand pressed steadily on the horn, his foot madly flickering the floor switch for his headlights.

At the exit of the tunnel he slowed momentarily as he bumped back across the center strip to his own lane. He cast one quick glance back at the steaming wreck piled across the mouth of the tunnel and then, without hesitation, swung once again in the direction of the city, stamping on the gas pedal.

But the road ahead was clear. The fog here had lifted enough to see the glaring cyclop eye winking down impersonally from each light pole; they illuminated a deserted pavement. With a vicious muttered curse, Da Silva tightened his grip on the steering wheel, increasing his speed. But he knew with a sinking feeling, even as he shot past the empty shining sea wall and the silent dripping palms, that he had lost his quarry.

roadway; there seemed to be something sinister in the smooth manner in which they appeared to float through the foggy night, as if they rode in some hideous bubble that seemed to shrink, getting smaller and smaller every moment. Maybe it is only another form of my old dream, Ari thought, swallowing forcefully, my old nightmare from Tier 3, Row 4, Barracks 4; the frightening dream of being suffocated, clamped down upon, stifled. He drew in a deep breath, freeing his lungs shudderingly, and forced himself to lean back, attempting calmness.

The tunnel swallowed them; the hum of the tires subtly changed tone. Mathais seemed to suddenly acquire a certain air of tenseness. As the car rolled smoothly beneath the glinting battery of fluorescent lights, he sat straighter, as if quietly awaiting something. Now the tires were sucking the roadway with their old whine; the arched mouth of the tunnel had spewed them out once again into the night. And then, behind them, Ari heard the dampened protest of brakes, the muffled, tortured screaming of metal rasping angrily against concrete, and then the final pounding crash. Their driver did not falter but drove smoothly on. Ari turned his head swiftly, staring back through the tiny rear window, but their car had competently swerved away from the main roadway, and the tunnel was now hidden. In the shimmering reflections cast waveringly up from the wet pavement, he could see the second Packard hurrying to catch up with them, swaying slightly on the uneven street. He turned back to see Mathais once again relaxing in his seat, his huge blocks of teeth shining white in a satisfied smile.

“An overly curious cab driver,” said the hotel manager unctuously. “I had noticed him parked a bit above the hotel when we left; he started to follow us.” His voice hardened; there was something familiar about the hardness,

A sudden rift in the fog bank gave a momentary glimpse of the city, a flashing view of tiny streets and foreshortened apartment buildings dropping steeply away, but before Ari could fix it in his sight, the curtain of mist swept between them and they were once again back in their silent medium, swaying ever higher.

The faces about him were expressionless. What would you say if you knew you were taking a Jew up to meet your leader? he said to them silently, bitterly. What would you do? Would your cowlike faces at least assume some expression, even if it were only of anger? Would you look shocked, surprised? Amused? You would look the same, he thought with cold disgust; you are automatons, robots, and you would look the same. You have looked the same for a thousand years; you would not change now. Up and up they went; time seemed to stand still for their silent ascent into the mysterious emptiness of the blind sky. The hum of the huge wheels rolling quietly on the cables washed them all in weariness; the figures of his bodyguards, slumped in the wooden seats along the wall of the swaying car, seemed steeped in hypnosis, watching him as if drugged. The yellow fog beyond the glistening window swirled about sluggishly, casting back the weak light from the climbing car in spectral lights and shadows.

The ride seemed endless. As they rose the fog became cooler; the drop in temperature was quite apparent. Ari welcomed the sudden cold, laying his head against the wooden window frame, enjoying the dampness on his cheek. And then a sudden squealing of the cables jerked his head up; they were decelerating. The swaying became less pronounced, the invisible pull upward was being reduced. There was a sharp scraping sound as they

dragged against something, coming to rest with one final tug. They were on top; the door opened.

He stepped out into a world apart from any he had ever known. The fog was thinner here; above him the faint glow of the moon could be seen, forcing itself through the spreading webs of mist. The cloudlike blanket of fog flowed below on all sides, curling folds that boiled in the air only a few feet beneath his precarious perch. The movement of the car seemed to remain with him, as if the mountain itself were shifting slightly; he took a few steps and the earth miraculously firmed. The four men who had ridden with him formed a file that led him to a flight of steps set in one corner of this aerie.

“On the platform,” one said harshly. “He will meet you alone on the platform above.” Ari stared at them blankly; a thumb jerked abruptly upward, and with a nod he began to climb.

The rounded railing was damp under his fingers, the concrete steps slippery beneath his feet; he seemed to be mounting into the heights of the sky itself. Below he heard the scraping sound and the thin whining of the cables as the little car hesitatingly took off on its descent to the earth so far below. Then the silence about him was complete.

The upper platform was lit only by the growing brilliance of the now triumphant moon, and by a red airplane-warning beacon mounted on a slim steel pole high above. He stepped into the red puddle of light that the beacon cast and watched his skin take on a bloody tinge. With a faint shudder he stepped away to the soft clean moonlight, leaning on the railing, turning his back on the cynical red eye, peering down into the ocean of fog that flowed beneath. From the distant hidden rocks far below, the tiny sounds of surf came up in weak crashes, fighting their way through the thick insulating layers of yellow mist; he tried to

remember the foot of the cliff as he had seen it many times in brilliant sunlight, but the picture refused to form. He could only see the waves beating against the black rocks in endless darkness, tragically tearing at the giant, wearing upon it, trying to drag it down under the murky sea.

His eyes swept the fog bank below; lighter spots came and went, reflecting the lights of the city in thinner layers. Somewhere below this cloud mass lay the beauty he had come to know and love, the winding beaches, the swaying palms. A sudden puff of breeze cleared a spot for an instant; the glittering curve of Copacabana sprang into view and then was lost again as the mist rolled back. At least I've been to Sugar Loaf, he thought in sudden sardonic bitterness. And then, surprisingly, his feelings changed to thankfulness. Yes, he thought, at least I've been to Sugar Loaf! I promised myself to come, and I am here! Even though it is dark and foggy, even though I came through no volition of my own, I am here! I shall take my satisfaction from this; we must take our satisfaction where we can!

Time passed slowly; then the creaking of the car wheels straining against the taut cable came clearly again through the night, gradually increasing in sound. The tiny car was once again approaching. He listened intently. There was the familiar scraping sound again, the car dragging slowly against the ledge, and then silence. A few minutes passed as he waited, suddenly tense, feeling the fog at his back. Then hesitant footsteps could be heard as they came across the lower walk and started slowly up the steps, dragging, as if their owner were feeling his way. A figure began to emerge from the lower level, rising from the stairwell; the heavy hat first, then the shadowed face, and finally the tall, slightly stooped body. It paused at the top of the stairway, as if in contemplation or seeking rest, and then came slowly across the platform to Ari's side.

They faced each other in silence. The taller man had a rough scarf wound about his mouth and nose, as if for protection against the fog, and with a brief nod of his head in Ari's direction, he began to remove it, glancing contemptuously about as he did so. The scarf came off slowly, like a mummy's bandage; Ari found himself studying the glittering eyes during the unwinding operation. This man is mad, he suddenly thought; and his heart began to accelerate, rumbling in his ears.

The cowl was finally disengaged, the grizzled head shook itself in freedom, casting aside the narrow band of cloth; he turned abruptly to Ari.

"Herr Busch?"

Ari said nothing; the face before him wavered and then took shape again; it was lined and aged, the hair beneath the brim of the huge hat was sprinkled with white. There was something familiar in the voice, in the cast of the face.

"Herr Busch?" The repetition was demanding.

Where had he seen this face before? His mind fled through the past, down the years of the horror that had been his homeland, and came automatically to Buchenwald; and there he found the answer. The shock of recognition struck Ari brutally; his voice caught in his throat. The mad features before him dimmed as dizziness swept him and then faded, but a nameless joy also swept him at his discovery. The harsh face stood waiting impatiently.

"Von Roesler." The words were forced from his throat in a burst of vengeful happiness; his heart increased its dreaded tempo, drumming wildly in his breast, physically shaking him.

The face before him suddenly smiled, congenial. "You know me? You are familiar with me?" The stoop disappeared as he stood militarily erect. "Then we can clear up this unfortunate misunderstanding quickly." He paused in reflection, turning to stare into the gleaming blue eyes with imperiousness. "You know me? From where?"

"Von Roesler! Colonel von Roesler!" Ari chuckled, a frightful sound in the whispering night; a sound to turn a more sane man in querying doubt.

"From the Fatherland? From the war?" The crazed eyes turned inward in glorious memory. "I'm sure that we have met; you know me, and you seem to be most familiar. Most familiar. Possibly I was a bit hasty in my first reaction to your visit, my dear Herr Busch." The eyebrows furrowed in thought.

"Colonel von Roesler!"

"From Poland, perhaps? Or Riga? Or possibly Paris. Was it Paris?"

Ari stared at him in mounting joy; a vicious smile twisted his lips. The other peered at him curiously.

"Or one of the camps. Did we meet in one of the camps? I was in many, you know." There was an unconscious pride in his tone. "I was at Auschwitz, and Maidanek. And Dachau. And Buchenwald, of course ..."

Ari listened to this fearful litany in grinning hate. At the sound of this name he chuckled aloud, almost sobbing. The crazed eyes swung around at the sound.

"Buchenwald? You were at Buchenwald? Of course!" He stared into the glittering blue eyes in grimacing concentration. "You were a guard there, I remember ... or a clerk.... Or were you one of the attendants at the ovens

Chapter 1

Da Silva and Wilson stood on the broad marble steps of the Instituto Medico-Legal in the hot afternoon sun, staring silently at each other. Wilson's head carried a wide bandage; his left arm swung stiffly from a silken sling.

"It's von Roesler, all right," Wilson said quietly. "I'll send his fingerprints off this afternoon, but I don't think there is any doubt." He stared at his companion's rigid face. "You were right, of course, all along."

"I was late, of course, all along," Da Silva said bitterly. He stared back over his shoulder at the tall bronze doors of the Instituto. "It was Ari who was right all along. Even at the end...."

Wilson touched the tall man's shoulder with his free hand, in compassion. "You cannot take a thing like this personally. You did everything you could have done."

Da Silva sighed, forcing his mind away from the battered, smiling body that he had so recently left behind, lying in peaceful oblivion in his narrow tier in the Medico-Legal. A thought that had lain dormant below the surface of his mind for some time now arose. He turned to Wilson somberly. "And the report? How will it go?"

"What do you mean?"

"You'll have to put in a report, you know. He was an American citizen. And what will your report say? Will it be another case of endless revenge by a Jew against a Nazi?"

They turned the corner into the Avenida. Ahead of them, across the little spit of bay with tumbling waves, the sheer cone of Sugar Loaf rose in the bright sunlight. A tiny car pulled its way along the fine cables, struggling toward the summit.

Da Silva tore his eyes away from it and turned to Wilson, suddenly smiling in his old carefree style.

“There is one punishment that Mathais, Strauss, Gunther, and all of the others will suffer,” he said almost happily, “a punishment that is worse than any I could possibly inflict upon them!”

Wilson looked at him with raised eyebrows, questioningly.

“The money!” Da Silva said with a bitter chuckle. “The money! The two million dollars! Here it is, in Brazil, somewhere; here it is with no owner, theirs for the taking! But where? You see, now that Herr Busch is dead, nobody knows!”

He put his hand under Wilson’s arm, helping him to cross a side street. They paused as traffic swept by them; then, with the street clear, they crossed and continued down the avenue, basking in the afternoon sun and the warm satisfaction of their friendship. In the distance, Sugar Loaf looked calmly down, endless and eternal, its peak fronting the sky majestically.

About the Author

Robert Fish is the Edgar-award winning author of over 30 novels and countless short stories. Fish was born in Ohio and 1912 and studied mechanical engineering at Case University. While working as an engineer in Brazil, Fish wrote his first short story, which was published in Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine. His experiences in Brazil also provided some of the key details for his first novel, *The Fugitive*. Unrelated to the popular television show and movie of that name, *The Fugitive* features a concentration camp survivor who travels to Brazil incognito in the early 1960's to infiltrate a burgeoning Nazi-revivalist movement. The novel won Mr. Fish an Edgar for Best First Mystery.

Fish wrote many more novels centering on Interpol detective Jose daSilva, who first appears in *The Fugitive*. They include: *Isle of the Snakes* (1963), *Brazilian Sleigh Ride* (1965) and *The Xavier Affair* (1969). Fish's novels often feature recurrent characters. Lieutenant Clancy, who first appears in 1963's *Mute Witness* reappears in *The Quarry* (1964) and *Police Blotter* (1965). *Mute Witness*, which was later reprinted as *Bullitt*, was turned into a movie starring Steve McQueen as Lieutenant Clancy.

Robert Fish died in 1981 in Connecticut.