

"Oh," I said, "this import stuff will keep me terribly active for months."

"Where?"

"Everywhere down there."

I had made the first mistake of the lunch. When around my mother, I always made errors. Did I like to think of myself as razor-keen? Her powers of detection could slice my intelligence into microscopic wafers. "Darling," she said, "if you're going to South America, don't be bland about it. Tell me the countries. The capitals. I have friends in South America."

"I don't want to visit your friends," I muttered, calling by habit on the old sullenness with which I used to greet her men-friends when I was an adolescent.

"Well, why not? They're wonderfully amusing people, some of them. Latin men are so concentrated in their feelings, and a Latin woman of good family might be just what you need for a wife--someone deep enough to bring out the depths in you," she murmured half-caressingly, but for the other half, most critically, as if I were a string-bean who needed plumping.

"Tell me, Harry, what sort of importing is it?"

Yes, what sort of case officer would I make when I had not even developed my cover story? "Well, it's precision military parts if you want to know the truth."

She put her head to one side, her cheek resting against one white glove, her blonde hair luminously alert, and said, "Oh, my Aunt Marial! We're travelling to South America for precision military parts! Herrick, you truly think I'm blissfully stupid. You are joining the CIA, of course. It's evident. I say, three cheers. I'm proud of you. And I want you to trust me. Tell me it's so."

I was tempted. It would make this lunch considerably easier. But I could not. That would be transgression of the first injunction given us. Worse, she would let everyone of her New York friends in on the secret--only-for-your-ears! Might as well drop an announcement in the Yale Alumni Magazine. So, I stuck to my story. Well, I told her, she might have her dear friends in South America, but I happened to be a far less contemptuous person than she about the Latin people's potential economic possibilities. When it came to casings and gun-powder, quite a few Southern Hemisphere nations could bid most competitively with our own bullet folk. There was money to be made. I wished to make money, I told her. For my sense of pride and self, if nothing else. I was speaking with enough

indignation to convince my own ear, but her eyes filled, and in complete disregard of the damage to her highly-crafted eyelashes, a tear ran down her cheek, bringing mascara in its train. The misery of her life sat on her stained cheeks. "I think of all the people I've loved, and, do you know, Herrick," she said, "none of you have ever trusted me."

Lunch went on, but that was the true end to it, and I left New York on the first train I could catch, and returned to Washington and went down the next day, which was Sunday, to the Farm.

That involved a bus to Williamsburg, Virginia, and a cab to drop me and my luggage at a fresh-painted shed and gate in an endless chain-link fence beside a sign which read: Camp Peary--Armed Forces Experimental Training Activity. In answer to a phone call made by the sentry, a jeep finally arrived driven by a drunken Marine who kept wheeling his head up and down, or from side to side while he steered, as if his skull were a small craft bobbing in a chop. Sunday was obviously the day to get drunk.

Down the twilight we motored along a narrow road between tidewater pines. I saw fields of thicket full of thorny scrub. They spoke of ticks and poison ivy to come. It was a long two miles to reach a parade ground. Around it were wooden barracks

patriotism, my dedication, my recognition that no one could love America more, put me--was it possible?--among the anointed. Yes, I, lacking conspicuous talents and virtues, could be a true lover all the more. I adored America. America was a goddess. Washed by such beatific thoughts, I fell asleep on a half-gallon of beer.

In the morning, I was queasy at stomach and owned a pile-driver for a head. Taken by our a drill instructor to the supply room for fatigues, we promptly christened them by jogging two miles out to the gate house and two miles back. In those days, jogging was considered bizarre--about as many people practised it as do hang-gliding now, but then everything that first day was alien. As was the rest of the week. We took most of our courses in two-hour labs, and our curriculum was exotic to me. It was like sitting down in a restaurant to discover that nothing on the menu had ever been tasted before: Roast of peccary, cassowary stew, anteater steak, breast of peacock, lumpwort salad, passion-fruit pie, bisque of kelp.

Owing to the Agency's success in 1954 in Guatemala, the priority had gone back to covert action. While we still had clandestine photography, surveillance, border crossing, interrogation techniques, clandestine radio communication, advanced use of dead drops, our emphasis for the next sixteen

weeks was to focused on how to aid resistance groups in overthrowing Marxist governments. We had courses in parachute jumping, map reading, wilderness survival, unarmed special combat (dirty fighting), silent strikes (murdering without noise), physical conditioning, obstacle courses, and the assembly and disassembly of foreign and domestic pistols, rifles, sub-machine guns, mortars, bazookas, grenades, grenade launchers, TNT, C-3, C-4, dynamite and classified explosives with an accompanying variety of pressure release, push-pull, delay, slow fuse, and other varieties of detonators for the demolition of bridges, generators, small factories.

Compared to the real difficulties, our sixteen weeks, we were informed, was an overview. As well attempt to become a good courtroom lawyer in sixteen weeks. Still, it had purpose. The alumni who came back to St. Matthew's to deliver an evening exhortation in chapel were fond of remarking over tea how strenuously tough it used to be in the old days. Invariably, they would tell us in confidence, "My years at St. Matt's were the worst of my life, and the most valuable." Say something of the same for the Farm. I went in as a young man not properly graduated from college, a stranger to his own nature, not ready, but for his rock climbing, to pin any merit badges on his soul, and came out in the best physical condition of my

life, ready for a street fight, ready for glory. I was also one hell of a patriot. I would have trouble falling asleep if I happened to think of Communists; murderous rages would arise in me; and I was ready to kill any Red who would come through the window at that moment. I was not brain-washed, but brain-fevered.

I also made friends in large numbers. Were there thirty Junior Officer Trainees in our group? I could devote a chapter of my heart to each if, that is, we have, as I suspect, chapters of the heart for those who come close enough to color our emotions. Yet the irony is that we formed these deep alliances, like actors who are together in a play for sixteen weeks, and love and detest each other, and are inseparable, and have nothing to do with one another again until meeting once more on a new job. If I speak of Arnie Rosen or Dix Butler more than the others, it is only because I was to see so much of them later.

I have spoken of the value of Camp Peary for me, but it was a near thing. It could have turned out badly. I had been put, by the luck of the draw, (unless my father's hand was present) in a training platoon of ex-football players and ex-Marines. If I did well in class, and Rosen even better, our physical tests were severe. A fair shot, I was adequate at

weapons, and map reading was a piece of cake. Forty-eight hour survival treks in the forest around Camp Peary, offered, after summers in the Maine woods, no undue demand. I found myself, however, hopelessly inhibited at silent strikes. I could not throw myself into the state of mind required to tiptoe up behind a trainee pretending to be a sentry and whip a ribbon (in substitute for a wire garrotte) around his neck. When it was my turn to play sentry, I'd flinch before the cloth even touched my skin. My Adams apple, a prominent Hubbard pride, was in a panic of being crunched.

Dirty fighting went better. The throws, a mixture of wrestling and judo, called on the agility you needed on a rock face, and to the degree I was able to overcome my revulsion at close physical contact with another man, I improved, although it was easier to go through the dummy moves of breaking a man's fingers, stamping on his feet, cracking his shin, sticking three fingers into his larynx, one finger into his eye, and biting whatever was available. After all, such maneuvers could hardly be practised with all-out intent.

Boxing, however, was done on our own time at the gym. (However, we all felt the unspoken imperative not to avoid it.) I hated being hit on the nose. One blow was enough to switch me over to all that was wild-swinging and physically

gym, when I worked on the heavy bag, something of that vast and near to long-lost rage came back to me, and I tried to embody a bit of such hatred into each punch I gave the bag.

How well it worked, I do not know. I got better as time went on, but then, so did everyone. I may have gained a few strides on the rest. At the least, I began to handle Rosen with ease. What delivered me, however, was parachuting. From the day they first brought us to the thirty-eight foot tower, I was ready. Four stories above the ground, I would leap through a mock-up of a C-47 hatch--our instructor called it the "open-door policy"--and jump into space with my parachute harness (no parachute) attached to a spring cable. We had one and a half seconds of the eternal trip down: I was back to leaping off the balcony in Maine--when STOP! the cable and harness jerked us to a halt, and we swung above the ground. Some of the ruggedest men in our class would throw up before making their jump.

It was even better when we moved to a nearby airport. I found that I was relatively free of fear, even of the fear I might have packed my chute incorrectly, I thought it was not unlike sailing. Some understood it. Some never did. In Maine, I used to show what the family called a spiffy nostril for the yaw of the wind to port or starboard every ten or

fifteen minutes, but it was different passing through air--we came down quickly from low altitudes. Still, there was always the pullulation of the trees to give a clue to the wind vector, and I was even able to steer my parachute onto a target during night drops. The sky could be black and the white-washed landing circle below appear no more phosphorescent than the miniscule presence of a barnacle on a rock deep underwater, but I had my spiffy nostril: I landed in the circle as much as any man in our group.

Perhaps I was the best in our class. I cannot say this definitively because practised covert action officers kept coming back to Camp Peary for a week of touch-up training, but it was enough to know I was among the best, and the first of my pleasures was to be clearly superior to Dix Butler who had the fastest time on the obstacle course, was unapproachable at dirty fighting, surprisingly silent as a putative assassin, and a beast at boxing. Nobody but Minnie could work with him. He was also the unofficial arm wrestling champion at Camp Peary, and once succeeded in taking on everyone in the Club at the time, twenty-two men was the count, instructors and heavies among them, but it did not take longer than ten seconds to beat each man.

I could top him every time, however, when it came to hitting the center of that parachute target. It proved unbelievably grievous to his idea of himself. I discovered the first mechanism in an unstable ego--it is on an elevator that drops quickly. The muscle at the hinge of Dix Butler's jaw would swell up when he lost to me. It was a phenomenon. He was ready to kill. It was the first time I had ever been that near to a competitor of such capacity. His rage came off him like a ground wave.

The irony is that he ought to have been proud of his parachuting. He began with no ability at all. He was terrified of airplanes. Later, after we knew him better, he explained it one night in the Club. While he usually did his drinking in a group, for he liked to keep a quorum around to give resonance to his stories, Rosen and I were his pets, and on occasion, he drank only with us. I think his reason was that Rosen and I were an automatic first and second at book work. Butler, surprisingly good in the classroom, still had to recognize our superiority. I think he wanted to pick up more about the Eastern establishment. From his point of view, it was running just about everything in the Company, and Rosen and I were the best field studies available. On the other hand, he was not without contempt for us, and loved to talk and tell us

how to live even when he expounded on his fear of flying. "You fellows would not be able to comprehend it. People assume I'm afraid because I have some kind of tic. Big strong man, ha, ha. He's got a tic. Horseshit. I have what I call superior-athlete fear." He stared at us hard, then without warning, grinned, as if to feint us off our feet. "Neither of you can comprehend what goes on in an athlete's skull. You think like sportswriters." He gave whole value to the nugatory aspects of this word. "Sportswriters observe, but do not comprehend. The clue to a superior athlete is that he is telepathic." Butler nodded. "We also have the power to hypnotize moving objects, no, not hypnotize--the appropriate word is tele-kinesize. When I am properly keyed, I can not only read which play is next in my opponent's mind, but I can telekinesize a football."

"Divert it in its path?" asked Rosen.

"Damn right! By a foot to a yard on a long pass. And when a punt hits the ground, I can affect the bounce."

"You're crazy," said Rosen comfortably.

Butler reached forward, took Rosen's upper lip between his thumb and forefinger, and squeezed. "Cut that," Rosen managed to cry out through the grip, and to my surprise, Butler let go. Rosen had an odd authority, not unlike the way a spoiled but

very self-assured young boy can command a fierce police dog.

Up to a point.

"How could you do that?" Rosen complained. "We were just having a discussion."

"They don't teach it here," Butler said, "but that's the treatment for quieting an hysterical woman. Grab her upper lip and squeeze. I have used it in motel rooms from the time I was sixteen." Another token of beer. "Goddamnit, Rosen, don't you people in New York have the foggiest conception of manners? An hysterical woman calls me crazy, not a man talking to me."

"I don't believe your claims," said Rosen. "It's delusional. Tele-kinesis cannot be measured."

"Of course it can't. Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty applies."

We laughed. But I was impressed that Butler knew about Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty.

"My fear of airplanes," said Dix Butler, "is that I'm crazy. I'm always looking to raise the ante. The first time I ever got on a plane, it was a ten seater small enough for me to see the pilot. I tell you, I just had to play games with his steering hand. Before long, there is old Dix putting his mind into the pilot's fingertips, and thereby getting the plane just a bit whippy. Well, the pilot overcame that in turn by his

will. You can move other men's matter just so much with your mind--it's a highly inefficient mode for communication," and here he looked at us sitting across the table from him, his yellow-green eyes child-like and solemn like a lion in a tender moment, full of a poet's sweet awe at the wondrous equations of movement, and said, "All right, what do I do now that this pilot's hand is on its guard holding the stick, why, I start to listen to the plane. It's old, it's creaky, and its two motors are wheezing out their lungs with every buck and tuck--man, I have ears, I get into the vitals of that ship. I know how little it would take to set the motors on flame, crack the wing at the root. Nothing is holding that flying machine together but the mental strength of everyone of the passengers and pilot just praying to keep hold of their paltry existence. And there I am, in the middle, a maniac. My existence is larger than myself. I've been in car wrecks, been shot at. There's a no-man's-land out there between the given and the immense and it has a set of rules very few can follow. All I know is that I am not sufficiently afraid of death. It is a transcendental experience that calls to me right through the foam of this piss-taster's brew. Can rational shit-heads like the two of you comprehend that? I tell you, the mad scientist in me was ready to experiment. I wanted to wreck a mischief in the inner

machinery of that plane. You better believe that the desire was powerful. Why, the little washed-out idiots sitting around me in their passenger seats were so fearful of losing what they never had, an honest-to-God life, that I had to pull myself back from exercising my powers. I could truly visualize those plane motors catching on fire. I still believe that by my mental efforts, I could have started such a fire. In another moment, I would have. But I pulled myself back. I saved the plane from myself. Gentlemen, I was sick from the effort. My forehead had sweat on it the size of hailstones, and my liver might just as well have been stomped on by a platoon of Marines. I had to crawl off that misbegotten flying flivver when we landed. And I have been afraid of planes ever since. Afraid of my inability to restrain my evil impulses." Beer. A pause. Another swallow. One could visualize the stately flow of the beer down his gullet, equal in solemnity to the sure sweep of a conductor's baton.

I had no idea if he was serious or had merely been telling one of his tales, always and dependably extreme, but I suspect it was the truth, for him at least, since I believe he told it to purge himself, in much the way I had given my confession to Reggie Minnie. Next day, he began to make progress in his parachuting techniques, even as I began to move up in boxing,

until I even dared to get into the ring with Dix, and mustered enough character not to mumble as I put in my mouthpiece, "Take it easy, will you, Butler?"

It was an interesting three minutes. We were using sixteen-ounce gloves, and head-gear, but his jab still felt heavier than a straight right from any other trainee, and the first left hook I caught sent me staggering around the ring.

I think he was furious at me for having taken him again that morning in the parachute circle. I was in a panic, but the sight of Reggie Minnie in my corner, made me stay in with Butler and accept the bombardment to my ribs; I felt brain cells blinking out in full banks each time his jab spoke to my forehead. When, once or twice, he chose to catch me with a straight right, I was taught all I needed to know about electricity. The voltage discharged in my brain would never be discharged again. In the middle of it, I began to understand for the first time what a serious athlete might feel, for I had reached a place where I was ready to live in the maelstrom. I no longer wished to quit. I had found peace in combat. Blessed feeling! Damn the damage! Whatever little futures were now being wrecked in me forever, could not count against this quick enrichment of my ego.

Of course I knew the bell would ring, and the three minutes would be over. My vast determination to take whatever onslaught the gods would loose was attached to a three-minute contract. Just as well. Another three minutes, and I might have been in the infirmary. Later, watching Butler blast away at the trainee closest to him in weight, I was appalled at the power of his punches. Had Butler been hitting me that hard? I made the mistake of asking Rosen.

"Are you kidding?" he said. "He carried you."

I offer that in partial explanation for my dislike of Rosen.

The next day was Saturday, however, and I had a pass back to Washington and visited Harlot and Kittredge at their canal-house.

While it is tempting to speak of their home and marriage, since I observed them like an agent, there will be ample opportunity later. On this night, Hugh was in his den, catching up with paperwork, and so my time was spent in conversation with Kittredge. I was just as pleased. Despite Rosen's evaluation, I was feeling unaccustomedly charitable about myself, and before long could not keep myself from telling her how in the middle of my round with Dix Butler, I

had felt as if I were coming into some kind of union with myself. "It was," I told her, "like a physical epiphany."

Having been nourished, we must remember, by Skeats, I went on to say, "in the old Greek meaning of epiphany where a god appears before one to offer a brilliant insight."

"I think," she said, "that you may have had a fusion of Alpha and Omega."

"Well," I said. "I know you won't believe me, but I think of your ideas at the oddest times. Coming down in a parachute, believe it or not. My right cord is Alpha, the left is Omega. You'd love being in my mind then."

She was pleased with this. With the full authority of a third cousin, two years senior, she said, "I'll allow you to use those words. I won't fight it any longer."

I laughed. "What happened to me in the ring?"

Her expression took on its didactic cast. "I believe your Alpha and Omega came very close to one another in those three minutes," she said. "Don't smirk at what I say next. They felt the same release of energy that we know when we fall in love. Why does all the world adore the idea of falling in love if it isn't because we have so much more energy when love goes well? You had the determination to fight Dix Butler because your Alpha and Omega took sudden recognition of one another."

It takes time to be certain, but I suspect you have a large discrepancy between them. Your Alpha is much more worldly and courageous. And Omega is timid and dreadfully spoiled. He has an outsized fear of punishment, I would postulate. That is why you hated boxing so. As a working hypothesis, let's say a lot of your talents and possibilities are collected in Omega, so, Omega is timid and fearful about losing any of your potential treasures. Don't look uneasy. Many people have that vanity. No wonder Omega was resistant to boxing. Poor Alpha, manly fellow, wanted to do his best, but Omega kept pouting in the corner and refusing to cooperate. Omega has more grace, you see, than Alpha and was not offering it to Alpha until fusion occurred."

"Yes, but why?" I asked.

"Because it was a crisis. In emergencies, Alpha and Omega can sometimes perceive events identically. They no longer squirrel their separate reactions off to their own fold. Instead, it's General Quarters! All the alarms go off. They meet. However, if Alpha and Omega despise one another too profoundly, as is true for very neurotic people, then they will not cooperate. Not even in the face of disaster. They're accident-prone, you see!

"For more normal people, Alpha and Omega retain their power to reach each other in an emergency. In your case, in the ring, Omega decided to lend her gifts to Alpha, even if Omega was the one who had the most to lose. They cooperated. That gave you enough energy to get through those three minutes with that incredible mesomorph."

"It's a nice idea," I said.

"Of course."

"But isn't it just a way of saying we have to fall in love with ourselves before we can fall in love with anyone else?"

I don't know how much she liked that. She frowned and said, "It gets complicated. And you're making it sound pious. Why don't we leave it for another evening? Dear Hugh has got to be in a stew. We've left him alone too long."

with other men and women. When the light, the last, went up, the men, were introduced by such activities as removing our hat, leaving a light a wall, stopping by a fire hydrant, blowing a whistle, trying out's eyes, and-for charitable purposes-clearing your car with a flashlight.

Our signs broke down. Before long, we were moving at our own pace, and looking at a half-hour. Following Target into a department store, we invariably lost him to an elevator. When light and sound to light Target, Liaison and Reserve had been lost to him of the target. When sound is later, Target would never talk, the sign was down. Every hour on the hour, we returned to the steps of Norfolk every half to evening.

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Our training for the last two weeks was given over to Fun and Games. Introduced to surveillance, we were formed into teams of three who practised tailing an instructor through the streets and stores of Norfolk. It involved a good deal of fast walking, and a great deal of standing in front of any store window which offered a clear reflection of the street. One man, the Point, was supposed to stay close to the Target. On a three man team, Point was backed by Liaison and Reserve who watched alternate exits in buildings. We had signals to direct

each other back and forth: Stop, Go right, Go left, Speed up, Slow down, were indicated by such actions as removing our hat, leaning against a wall, stopping by a fire hydrant, blowing one's nose, tying one's shoe, and--the abominable favorite--cleaning your ear with a forefinger.

Our signs broke down. Before long, we were waving at one another, and running at a half-trot. Following Target into a department store, we invariably lost him to an elevator. When Point did manage to sight Target, Liaison and Reserve had been lost on one of the turns. When sooner or later, Target would finger Point, the game was over. Every hour on the hour, we returned to the steps of Norfolk City Hall to regroup.

At the Club that night, drinking was a spree. Practical jokes abounded. Dix and one of the detonation experts set up a compressed air cartridge in the toilet and brought out a wire to control the operation from a bar-stool. There was a fifteen-minute wait for in-phase resolution but when Rosen finally went to the toilet to take, as he made the mistake of announcing, "an ungodly dump," Trigger flicked the switch. Cartridge went off. Geyser splashed Target off the seat. Rosen's clothing was so drenched and spotted that he cut back to his barracks for a change of denims. "Surveillance is working at Camp Peary," became Dix's battle cry.

Meanwhile, more bona-fide explosions went off on night demolition exercises in the woods, and night parachutists landed, and men with blacking on their faces rushed in, quaffed a beer, rushed out. Years later, before I went to Vietnam, I was invited to a movie set on the day a battle was being filmed, and it was not too unlike the way some of Vietnam turned out to be, and certainly reminded me of the Farm. War consisted of special effects going off from time to time; that was more in the nature of the event than death. "Death is the price you pay for enjoying a real war," one of our more hard-bitten instructors said, and I thought of that when I got to Saigon.

Now, I felt like a kid on one of those endless summer nights when the fever of evening games keeps one running into the house and slamming the door on the way out. Our surveillance exercise might have been nerve-wracking, humiliating, and just about wholly unsuccessful, but the hysterical pleasure implicit in the work was erupting now. We had all been installed in the next thing to an honest-to-God movie. Shadowing a man was playing a role, and it felt as odd as a dream, agreeable and sinister.

Another victim walked into the bathroom of the Club, sat on the throne, and came out soaking wet. The compressed air

cartridge had been replaced. We laughed as if something in the very scheme of things had washed out to sea. I know something of that commotion of waters got into the rest of the night. Rosen had joined us again, dry in clothes, drunk on beer--we had watched him go from a teetotaler to a foam-hound in eight weeks--and his return signified by Butler.

"Got your powder dry?" Rosen was asked.

"Dix, did you set that rotten thing up?"

"I'll take fifty per cent of the credit."

"What a miserable thing to do to a buddy. You're lopsided."

Lopsided proved to be an ill-chosen word.

"Punk," said Butler, "spread your cheeks. I'll teach you lopsided."

Rosen, who normally presented a small but iron face to his persecutors, now hovered on the edge. For a moment, I thought he was going to cry. "Dix, you are not quite human," he managed to say, and with something like dignity, walked out of the barracks. Butler shook his head. "Hubbard, I was just treating him like a brother," he said.

"Is that what you call it?"

"My older brother used to corn-hole me until I hit him up side of the head with a rock. I was fourteen. You got an older brother?"

"Younger brothers."

"Corn-hole them?" Dix asked.

"No."

"Weren't man enough?"

"My brothers are twins. That's confusing."

He laughed. He clapped me on the back. He had a light in his eye that put perspiration into the palms of my hands. To my surprise, however, he sighed. "Oh, well, Arnie will recover. The question is: What about me? I'm getting too old to be a legend."

I don't know how much of this scene with Butler carried over, but much went wrong with Rosen on the night we were supposed to cross the mock-up of the East German border. For one thing, it had rained through the day. The woods were muddy, and the air swarmed with midges. The night sky was clouded. We had to proceed by compass alone, a slow procedure prone to error.

We were working on a well-prepared scenario. If there was a climax to our stint at the Farm, and one course which had superior instructors and good preparation, it was Escape,

Cover, and Interrogation. Over the last three weeks each of the trainees in my group had been given a special role of as a West German agent infiltrated into East Germany, that is, we each had to absorb our own West German biography and then add a detailed East German cover story to it. This second biography we were obliged to memorize. It included a profile of the jobs we had held in East Germany, a family and school history including those of our near relatives killed in the Second World War, as well as the dates corresponding to major Allied bombing raids on our alleged home town, Männernburg. That was a good number of details to memorize. Rosen and I were not only re-named Hans Krull and Werner Flug for the exercise, but had been living in these roles through a two-hour training session every day.

At this point in time--so went the scenario--our West German principal sent out an alert: our radio transmissions were being picked up and we had to make a run for the border. The last two miles would traverse an East German wood which corresponded--small surprise!--to our own Virginia thicket. If we succeeded in getting over the fence unobserved, then our cover stories would not have to be used (although we were still expected to volunteer for an interrogation as if we had been caught--in order not to miss the experience!) Any chance to

use this more gracious option, however, was unlikely. We were not expected to make it over the fence. Few did.

I wanted to. I had gathered from Harlot that not only were one's grades at the Farm put into the 201 File, but also a five-letter code grouping which had much secret bearing on one's career. While you might have a good general idea of how well you had done at the Farm, these coded merits and demerits had the leverage to advance or exclude you from exceptional posts. One of the best such marks, I was just about certain, had to be given for getting over the fence, and there would be concealed rating, no doubt, for how well one did in the interrogation.

Our night, however, was off to a poor start. By the time we reached the ditch adjacent to the East German fence, our fatigues were imbued with a noxious muck. Feeling filthy and unmanned, we had to duck every thirty seconds as a searchlight swept the dirt road and fence in front of us. Every minute, a Jeep went by in one direction or the other. During one of these irregular intervals, we would be obliged to scramble up the mudbank, climb the fence, go over the barbed wire at the top, and drop fourteen feet down to the other side. There, by our rules, was freedom!

Rosen, however, seemed demoralized by what it had taken to get this far. I think he was secretly and desperately afraid of the barbed wire. "Harry, I can't do it," he muttered. "I can't make it." He was frantic enough to infect me with his fear.

"You goddamn Kike, get your ass over," I shrieked. It was, of necessity, a half-throttled cry, but it was there between us forever, a small but permanent bruise on my self-esteem. The searchlight went by, and sobbing from fatigue, we scrambled up the vile mud bank, hit the fence, started to climb, and were transfixed--also forever--in the glare of the searchlight as it returned, stopped like the angel of death, and came to rest on us. In but a few seconds, an armed Jeep with two guards drove up, its machine gun trained on our bodies. We had flunked. So, for that matter, would most of the class. Even the Big Ten jocks. The exercise was not designed to make East European agents of us, but to give insight into what an horrendous night in our occupation might yet be like.

Since the guards were wearing East German uniforms, the Jeep proved to be the only element in the charade which did not seem authentic. We were manacled and driven at high speed along the border road to a one-story white-washed cinder block

building. Inside, was an aisle down the middle, and a series of windowless interrogation cells on either side, each cell about eight feet square and containing no more than a table, a couple of chairs, and a strong lamp with a reflector that would soon be directed into our eyes. The interrogator spoke English with such an intense German accent that willy-nilly one found oneself copying him. I had never seen any of these men at the Farm, and only learned later that they were professional actors on contract work to the Company; this contributed to disrupting one's anticipations; everything was becoming more real than I expected.

Since the interrogators moved from room to room to question other trainees as they were brought in, and one was left by oneself for longer and longer periods, I began to feel, given the alternation of intense interrogation and glaring white-walled silence, a sense of dislocation as the night went on. My cover story felt awkwardly lodged in my head, a mind jammed into my mind. Under questioning, however, the cover story pressed forward to become nearly all of me. I learned how a role could become more vivid to an actor than his own life. How quintessential was preparation! Each detail in my imaginary life upon which I had failed to meditate sufficiently became an added weight. For I was now obliged to recall the

detail by an act of will. In contrast, every moment I had contemplated in advance became alive to me. Conceiving of the odor of the corridors of the vocational school at Männernburg near Leipzig, which my cover story had me attending after the Second World War, I could not ignore the pervasive (if imaginary) stench that came through the school windows from the rubble of charred humans, dead rats, crumbled stone, and garbage outside--just such invention went into the best of my visualizations.

"What was the name of your training school in Männernburg?" my interlocutor asked. He was dressed in a black Volkspolizei uniform and held an impressive sheaf of papers. Since he was also dark in complexion with a shock of heavy black hair and dark beard, I found it difficult to think of him as German until I recalled that the Nazi, Rudolph Hess, had also had just such an iron-blue pallor to his shaved cheeks.

"Der Hauptbahnhof Schule," I replied, "was my school."

"What did you study there?"

"Railroad trades."

"Graduate?"

"Yessir."

"How did you get to school, Werner?"

"I walked from my home."

"Every day?"

"Yessir."

"Remember the route?"

"Yessir."

"Name the streets you took."

I recited them. Not only was the map clear in my mind but I knew from photographs taken soon after the War how the streets ought to look.

"On your route, Herr Flug, it was obligatory to take the Schönheitweg?"

"Yessir."

"Describe the Schönheitweg."

I could see it before me as I spoke. "It was our grand avenue in Männernburg. The Schönheitweg had an island of grass between the two directions of traffic."

"Describe this island."

"It had trees."

"What kind of trees?"

"I do not know the names."

"Were any of these trees cut down??"

"Yessir."

"Why?"

"I don't know," I said.

"How many traffic lights on the Schönheitweg?"

"Maybe two."

"Two?"

"Yessir, two."

"Near which traffic light did they cut the trees?"

"The second light on my way to school."

"In which year did they cut down the trees?"

"I don't remember."

"Think, Werner, think."

"Before I graduated in 1949."

"You are saying they cut down the trees in 1947 or 1948?"

"Probably."

"Do you recognize this picture?"

"Yes. It is of the intersection at the second traffic light on the Schönheitweg. Before they cut down the trees."

He pointed to a building near the intersection. "Do you remember this?"

"Yessir. Post-war. The Männernburghof. A new government building."

"When did it go up?"

"I don't know."

"You don't remember the construction?"

"No, sir."

"You passed every day on your way to school, but you don't remember the construction of the only new government edifice in your town?"

"No, sir."

"But you saw it every day on your way to school?"

"Yes, sir."

"Was 1949 your last year at school?"

"Yessir."

"In 1949, the Männernburghof had not yet been constructed."

"It hadn't?"

"No, Werner."

"I am confused."

"It was erected in 1951. And the trees were cut down in 1952."

I was in a panic. Was the memory I had developed for my East German biography at fault, or was the interrogator lying to me?

"Maybe I graduated in 1952, not 1949," I said.

"You are in serious trouble," he replied.

He now inquired about my work in the railroad yards.

Again, I was presented with small but definite discrepancies in the names and faces I had memorized: A locomotive repair shop

to which I had been sent as clean-up man was located not at the east but the west end of the yards, and when I insisted it had to be in the east because I could remember the sun coming up in the morning, my interrogator left me alone for half an hour before coming back to ask the same questions again.

Fortified by every photograph I had studied, a picture of the town of Männernburg had formed in my mind, but it was incomplete. Like a painting by Larry Rivers--whose work, after this interrogation, never failed to fascinate me--there were blank spaces in my imaginary Männernburg. As the hours of questioning went by, edges began to blur.

"Why were you climbing the border fence, Werner Flug?"

"I did not know it was the border."

"Despite the barbed wire at the top?"

"I thought I was in a government park. Me and my partner were lost."

"You were in a forbidden area. Did you know that?"

"No, sir."

"Männernburg is only five kilometers east of the border."

"Yessir."

"You are aware of that?"

"Yessir."

"Yet you walk through the woods that lie to the west of Männernburg, and are surprised to find a fence."

"Me and my partner thought we were walking to the east, not the west."

"Werner, you were found with a compass on your person. You were not lost. You knew if you could climb the fence, you would be in West Germany."

"No, sir."

"Where would you be?"

"It was a prank, sir. We bet each other who would be the first to get over."

"You are a stupid fellow. Your story is sickening. It insults intelligence." He stood up and went out.

In chess, if one studies openings carefully enough, one can play on equal terms with a far superior opponent for the first eight or ten or twelve moves, for as long, that is, as the opening has been analyzed. After that, one is, as they say in chess, "out of the book."

I was now out of the book. I had an acquired background and an acquired biography, but I did not have an explanation of why I had climbed the border fence in the middle of the night.

My interlocutor came back, and began to question me as if our first colloquy had not taken place. Once more I was asked

which year the trees were cut down on Der Schönheitweg. Again, I was interrogated on my claim that the railroad foundry was in the east yard. Each of my errors began to seem larger. I do not know if the act of confirming false details was responsible, but I began to feel as if his questions were equal to a dentist's drill, and the nerve would soon be touched. To my horror, I began to contradict myself in little ways. Now, I tried to claim that I must have blundered by error into West Germany across a portion of the border that had--could it be?--no fence, then had wandered through the woods wanting to return to East Germany, and so had climbed the fence on the Western side, and was descending on the East German side in order to go back to work in the morning like a good citizen of the German Democratic Republic "just when the soldiers found us."

"Your sweat stinks with your lies. When I come back, Flug, I want the truth or I will give you a couple of hot ones." He was holding a rubber truncheon, and he slapped it against the table. Then he left.

Outside my eight by eight foot white cement block room, a prison din was building. The interview cells along the corridor had filled, and the most curious condition began to prevail. I do not know if the tempo of these interrogations

was accelerating in anticipation of the arrival of the dawn we could not see through the windowless walls, but even as my questioner left me with the suggestion of dire remedies, so did I become more aware of cries from other cells.

One captive was cursing audibly, "I don't know, I don't know. You've got me deranged," he shouted. Another was whispering, but so loudly I could hear: "I am innocent. You have to believe I am innocent," and from the farthest room down the corridor, one of the policemen was whipping his truncheon against the table. "No more, no more," someone cried out.

To relax was dangerous. I felt close to that early state of childhood when the only release for the fatigue and unreality of the day was to weep oneself back into those apocalyptic beginnings when the world was light and sound and noise, and one's connection to the dark has been severed by birth.

Then I heard Rosen. "This is outrageous," he was saying in a clear voice. "I do not care what my partner claims. You have confused him and terrified him. We only climbed the fence to be able to see the lights of Männenburg and thereby find our way back. That is my story. You may have shaken my partner, but you do not phase me. You cannot intimidate me with threats of violence. Never!"

The thwap came back from the cell at the far end of the corridor.

"Confess," said Rosen's interrogator. "You are not a citizen of the East German Democratic Republic."

"I am Hans Krull," said Rosen, "born in Männernburg."

"You are a piece of filth. Tell the truth or we will use the filth that comes out of you to stuff your nose. Why did you try to climb the fence?"

"I am Hans Krull," Rosen repeated.

Now, two truncheons were being used, one at each end of the corridor.

My sense of reality had not disappeared, but it was frayed. We were in Camp Peary, not East Germany, but I did not feel safe. Even as a casual vacation trip can remind one that death, too, is a journey, so did I now feel as if insanity did not exist across the sea from reality, but could be visited on foot. It was down the road.

My ears had never seemed more acute. I could hear Rosen arguing in his irritating, supercilious, nasal whine, and yet, could also hear his enormously developed sense of self-importance, ugly as gross riches to me, but that was nonetheless his kind of strength. "You are trying to throw me off the track," he was saying, "but it will not work. I submit

my case to the legal guarantees substantiated by Order of Law 1,378, Division Three, Chapter B, in the new Constitution of the German Democratic Republic. Look it up. It is there. My rights are being transgressed."

Yes, he had risen to the occasion! What a diversion! Now, the interrogator was out of his book! Later, I would learn that Rosen, in preparation, had gone to the Farm library three nights earlier to study the new Constitution of East Germany, thereby picking up enough to offer this exceptional gambit.

My interlocutor came back. Again, he began to question me from the beginning. I was led from detail to detail about the year the trees were cut down on Der Schönheitweg. Again, we passed through the railroad foundry and the aborted climb of the chain-link fence.

"It was because we were lost," I said, "and I wished to look for the lights of Männernburg."

"Your partner has told that story already. We have disproved it."

"I am telling the truth."

"Earlier you have claimed that you did not know it was the border."

"I knew it was the border."

"You lied to me before?"

"Yessir."

"Why?"

"I was frightened."

"After which you said that you tried to climb the fence as a prank."

"Yessir."

"A lie?"

"Yessir."

"Why?"

"Same reason."

"You claim you blundered into West Germany through an unfenced portion of the woods, and were now climbing back into East Germany."

"Also a lie."

"And now you are climbing the fence to look for the lights of Männergernburg?"

"That is the truth."

"You have confessed to lying three times, but now you tell the truth?"

"Yessir."

"A pity you did not think of it earlier."

"Yessir."

"In fact, you are a liar, and an agent of the West German government."

A siren went off. It resounded through the corridors and cells of the building. My interrogator gathered his papers and sighed.

"It's over," he said.

"It is?"

"I wish I'd had another fifteen minutes." He looked angry. Indeed, he still looked like a policeman.

"Well, it's been weird," I said.

"You did well," he said.

"I did? How do you know?"

"I could kill you. When you make me feel like a cop, you've been good."

I stood up.

"Yeah, you can go," he said. "There's a truck to pick you up."

"I think I'll walk back to camp. Is that okay?"

"Sure. You've got the day off now."

"I think I need the walk."

"You bet."

We shook hands.

I did the two miles back to the parade ground and the barracks. New trainees were taking their first jumps through the mock-up of the C-47 door on the thirty-eight foot tower. In another six hours, my training would be over and I would go back to Washington to work on Cockroach Alley by the reflecting Pool before, presumably, being assigned overseas. As I made my way to the cafeteria for breakfast, I felt an epiphany near. I had passed through a dark wood full of midges and ticks, was captured in fatigues filthy with the slime of a border ditch, my fingers raw and newly scabbed from the chain-link fence, my eyes aching from the glare of the reflector lamp in the eight by eight foot cell, and I had lied all night in the face of prodigies of attack on a contrived memory, yet I felt clean and full of the virtue that greets one at the end of a rite of passage. It had been the most exciting eight hours I had spent in CIA.

It was then that I saw Alpha and Omega behind the low clouds on either side of the early morning sun. Each was standing on the horizon like the reflected radiance of a god. I had never been so happy. Something in the hours of interrogation confirmed my training. I had found the realm where I could spend my working life. To labor every day for the security of my country appealed to every breath that

Hubbard blood and lungs deeded over to doing what was appropriate. My Alpha felt as healthy with this decision as my stomach sitting down to a perfect breakfast in the morning. And for the other side of me, not yet worldly enough to have begun my spiritual explorations and longed-for carnal adventures, my nocturnal Omega, fascinated with deception and the war against evil, intrigued with games and the no man's land of those who were ready to play such games, was also in accord. I was given my epiphany. Happiness was that resonance of the heart when Alpha and Omega came to concordance in the morning air.

The canal house purchased by Hugh Montague after his wedding to Kittredge, was situated on the bank of the old Chesapeake and Ohio Canal that passes through Georgetown. This waterway, if I recall correctly, was a thriving artery in 1825, bringing its fair load of coal down from Appalachia to the Potomac before the barges were towed back with a cargo of such assorted sundries as flour, gunpowder, bolts of cloth, and axes. After the Civil War, however, the Canal could no longer compete with the railroads. Now, the mills on the river banks

were long empty, the locks were still, and the canal-bed was a trickle.

Hugh's house, built as a stable for tow-mules, was also graced with a second-floor loft where barge men could sleep in the hay. By the time it was purchased by the Montagues, the little building, renovated by successive owners, had something like seven or eight rooms, and had become a modest but charming house for those who could abide child-sized chambers and low ceilings. One would have assumed that Hugh and Kittredge were too tall for the place, but the canal house revealed a side of them I might not otherwise have perceived. The nature of their separate professional tasks had this much in common: their labors were often lonely, and rarely void of anxiety. So they tucked themselves into their canal house which they called--no great surprise--the Stable, and if there was a century-old effluvium of straw and mule-balls embedded in the floor-boards, why, the better. Coziness was their connubial marrow. Since they were both, as I soon discovered, tough with a dollar, I think it helped that their little find had cost but \$10,000. (Late in 1980, in a stroll one afternoon in Georgetown, I discovered that the house sold by them in 1963, and several times again by subsequent owners, was now up to nothing less than an asking price of \$250,000, thank you. That

inspired--how could it not?--an ongoing reverie on the changes in our American republic these thirty years.)

It also provided a half hour of melancholy. The Stable came back to my memory as it used to be in 1955 when Hugh and Kittredge were the only people I knew apart from training.

I used to love their small living room, small dining room, and very small study for Hugh. Into those former mule mangers, Kittredge showed something of her father's inclination for collecting antiques. Given Dr. Gardner's measure of our American map as seen from Brattle Street, Kittredge was now living in the South. Why, then, not develop a finder's talent for rare originals by colonial cabinetmakers from Virginia and the Carolinas? As she spoke of her acquisitions, I began to hear names I had never encountered before, and was not to meet often again: Pre- and post-Revolutionary artisans such as Thomas Affleck, Aaron Chapin, John Pimm, Job Townsend, Thomas Elfe. They went in and out of her conversation, Pimms and Elfes and Chapins, until I did not know who had designed what, nor from where. I could hardly be concerned whether her cherrywood dining table and hand-wrought chairs with doe feet (which were, indeed, touchingly carved) her poplar sugar chest, her planter's table, her candlestand, were choice samples from Piedmont, North, or South Carolina. It was enough that they

had pedigree. Like show dogs, these pieces were not the same as other beasts. A manifest of the eighteenth century had been brought into an early nineteenth century stable, and there were we, an audience of the twentieth century. Above the fireplace in the dining room, was a scene, neatly painted, of woods and houses and a canal, not our canal, but the old paint carried the eye into a glen of the past; whiskey taken by the fire, then fortified with her pate, tasted awfully good.

Harlot's study was another matter. Kittredge had furnished it to his choice, and I, as a peculiarly loyal and treacherous friend, felt a pang at how well she understood his desires. These sentiments of treachery in the midst of all my honest feelings (for there were no two people I cared for more) revealed to me the true attraction of treachery. It felt as bright as a spring leaf. Treachery helps to keep the soul alive--a most awful thought! What if it is true?

Harlot's study consisted of not much more than a massive dark oak desk, and a leviathan of a chair. Victorian furniture, circa 1850, obviously satisfied Harlot's idea of a companionable style. A taste for the substantial gave solemnity, Harlot would explain, to the subterranean and lewd endeavors of the period. That is a large thought for one piece of furniture, but his grand seat was of mahogany and nearly

that lost to Tito. I was impressed with his Balkan manners. When he toasted Kittredge--which he did frequently--he not only raised his glass but curved his knee, as if the good leg were a bow and he was flexing it. Another guest was a formidable old lady with a grand manner, porcelain blue eyes and white hair, a half-Bavarian, half-Italian countess who had run an underground safe-house in Rome for Jews during the occupation.

Twice, Kittredge had a girl there for me, each the younger sister of a Radcliffe classmate of hers, and both young ladies proved no better than I at petting on a couch somewhat later that night in my crowded apartment. We got awfully drunk to do that, and roommates would come through the door or go out, and my romances were without wings. I was becoming seriously concerned about the intensity of my sexual dreams compared to the lukewarm manifestations of it I was able to offer the dating world.

One evening, the Montagues had a guest who most certainly brought out the best in Harlot. We were only four at table. Given the size of the dining table, they never sat down to more than six. This night, as I say, we were four, but it looked like five since their guest was a British general six-feet-seven-inches tall, of magnificent bearing, with four rows of ribbons six inches wide on his chest and he sat at his

quarter of the table and drank all night, and nodded wisely to all Harlot said. It seemed he had been in the SOE, and served on sister missions with the OSS, parachuting into France with Harlot. After which they became good fellow sots in London. Since the General contributed nothing but his immaculate and immense presence, his lineage--which went back a little less than eleven hundred years--his title, Lord Robert, and his remarkably impressive uniform which he wore, he murmured, "in Kittredge's honor," conversation was left to Harlot. He did not flag. I had never known anyone to speak as well on so many matters; if Harlot had a conversational vice, it was his preference for a monologue. Sir Robert suited him. "What," the General asked, after listening to other matters for a half hour, "is the history on this place? Looks quaint. What do you call it? Georgetown? Has to've been named after the King, one of them, anyway, hope not the Third." That was Lord Robert's longest speech of the night. Harlot reimbursed his guest with a disquisition on Georgetown after the War--the Civil War. "Nothing but camps and government corrals and a few unfortunate bone factories. An awful lot of the horsemeat put into tins for the Union troops was processed just a few streets down. You can still smell dead animals when there's a fog."

"Hugh, you can't," said Kittredge.

"Darling, I can sniff them out," said Hugh, and the reflections on his eyeglasses were dancing from the candle light.

"It must have been an awful place for a little while," admitted Kittredge. "Full of diptheria and brothels."

I had the distinct impression that Lord Robert perked up. Dead horses one hundred years gone might not waken much of the historic sense, but old brothels did!

"All the same, it was a thriving work-town," said Hugh, "full of flouring mills and corn mills, and hammers hitting the adze in the cooper's shops, a good sound."

"Good," agreed Sir Robert.

"Saws and planing machines," Hugh went on, "anvils dinging away. Moan of the bellows. Such stuff. On a still night," said Harlot, "I can hear echoes. Raucous bars where canal men fought. A few of those places seem to have made it all the way down to our time, and boys like Herrick, who work in the government, go to drink there now."

"What did you say your name was?" asked Lord Robert.

"Herrick Hubbard, sir."

"His father is Cal Hubbard," said Harlot.

"Yes, a man of very strong opinions, your father," said Lord Robert, as if, during mental life on his own promontory

six feet seven inches high, not many people had voiced their opinions up to him.

"Hugh leaves too much out," Kittredge said. "Georgetown was, for the most part, a darling place. It had houses with porticoes and gabled dormers. Loads of gingerbread on the eaves."

"Kittredge, you have it wrong," said her husband.

"Do I?"

Two spots of anger showed in her cheeks, an unhappy color, a dull purple. It was the first time I had ever seen her looking harsh and unattractive. It gave me a sense of the reason they did not invite me to sleep over: If they wished to quarrel, they would need the space to raise their voices. I did not believe they would fight often, but I could also feel how jagged disagreement must be.

Hugh, however, was not about to go to war with his wife, not while the General and myself were there as linesman and judge. "She's absolutely right," he said to us, "and so am I. We happen to be talking about opposite ends of the town."

"Never knew a place that didn't have its up street and its down," Lord Robert said.

"Yes. Funny story. I was reading about Georgetown last night in a local history." Hugh began to laugh in advance.

His mirth was powerful enough to suggest how much anger toward Kittredge had just been packed away. "Quotes a newspaper account from 1871. A resident of this town, Thaddeus Atwater, slips on the ice one March morning on Q Street, and his cane flies out of his hand and hits a hog strolling by"--a look at Kittredge who put her tongue out at him and took it back so quickly, that the General, if he had seen it, might have thought his eyes were up to tricks--"whereupon the injured pig roars like a bull and bolts into the nearest open cellar door which happens to be a carpenter shop with shavings on the floor. It's filthy dark down there, and they've set a candle on a stand which, of course, the beast promptly knocks over, and that starts one hell of a fire with the shavings. Enter Red Hat. . ."

"Red Hat?" asked Lord Robert.

"The local fire-horse. A giant of a steed. He was pulling the Henry Addison fire wagon in unison with his mate, Dora Girl. The firemen drop hose into an adjacent brook, begin to pump, and manage to quench the fire, although they are all the while slopping so much water over Q Street that it ceases to be a road and in a few hours becomes a frozen pond. By evening, the townspeople come out to try their ice-skates. I enjoy that period," said Harlot.

"Yes," I said, "events had more influence on other events."

"Yes," he said, "you're not a dull boy, are you? You see the metamorphoses, don't you?"

"Speaking of metamorphoses," Lord Robert said, coming out of the trance Hugh's story had left him in, "there's talk of sending Philby to Beirut. Going to give him a journalist's job."

"Oh, no," said Harlot. "It'll play like hell over here. Do your best to stop it. It's hard enough to keep the FBI off MI-6, without giving Philby a plum."

"Be bad for you, too, won't it?"

"No," said Harlot, "all is forgiven."

"Hope so. I used to think it was your Waterloo."

"Not at all," said Kittredge. "They need Hugh much too much."

"Good to hear that."

"The mark of a great man," said Kittredge, "is that his mistakes are also great."

"Well, damn Philby, I say," said Lord Robert. "Let's drink to his damnation."

"To Philby," said Harlot, holding high his glass. "Damn him for eternity."

in the Soviet zones of Germany and Austria. I wondered if he had been a spy for Harlot. All the same, I found him unsavory and wondered why the Montagues treated him with respect. On second examination, I could detect that Dr. Schneider was wearing an expensive white wig well-placed on his head, but I had my mother's eye for masquerade and so was intrigued with his desire to present himself as an older man. I hardly knew how I felt about sitting at table with what might be a crypto-Nazi.

After dinner, Harlot sat down to a game of chess with Dr. Schneider, and I decided that Hugh liked to enjoy people by their pieces and parts. "Watch the play," Harlot confided to me. "Schneider is phenomenal at the end game. He falters occasionally in the opening, but unless I'm two pawns up past the middle game, I'm far from home."

The pianist would rub his hands and croon and/or moan after every one of Harlot's moves. "Oh, you are a devil, Mr. Montague, you are a clever fellow, the trickiest, aren't you, oh, oh, oh, you have me in a pickle, you do, sir, a fiend with your knights you are, yum, yum, yum, yessir," after which, nodding his head, albeit still groaning, "Punkt," he would say, and move a pawn. As Harlot predicted, Dr. Schneider did well

in the end-game and brought off a draw. It was the only time I ever saw him at the Stable.

After he left, and I did notice that he and Harlot shook hands at the door like old comrades, Harlot asked me to stay. While Kittredge was doing the dishes (with which I usually helped her, although, on this night, by Harlot's insistence, signally not) he took me into his study, pinned me down on a small wooden chair to face his presence in the Cathedral Chippendale, and proceeded to give me the first reasonably full deployment of his mind that I had received since the night he told me to give up rock climbing.

I was ready to talk to him about my unhappy situation at work (about which he had never made one inquiry of me) but then I did not dare to speak to him about such matters. What if he had no interest?

At this moment, he said, "We haven't had a chance to talk shop."

"No, sir."

"Your father is coming back. We'll go out to dinner, the three of us."

"That sounds terrific." I kept myself from asking where my father had been. No word had come from him in months, so I did not see how I could inquire.

"Do you find CIA a large place?" Hugh Montague inquired.

"Enormous."

"We weren't always so big. In fact, the baby almost didn't get born. Truman hated the idea, and J. Edgar Hoover did everything he could to stop it. Didn't want his FBI in competition with anything. Hoover may be the most possessive, fear-ridden man in Christendom. We refer to him, by the way, as Buddha, J. Edgar Buddha. If the man you're talking to should be left at sea, then he is not one of us."

I nodded.

"Allen had a lot to do with getting Truman turned around. Now, what with good brother Foster owning Eisenhower's head, we're in shape. We're certainly expanding."

"Yessir."

"To do what?" he asked. "What is our purview?"

"To supply the President with Intelligence."

"Do you have a vision of what that Intelligence could be?"

"Well, the first necessity may be to catch up with Russian Intelligence."

"We may have to do a little better than that. I confess to you that I am full of what I hope is something more than theological hubris concerning the U.S."

"Then, it's not just the Russians," I dared to interject.

"No. Not just the Russians. We can probably work their mainspring loose, disembarass them--even if it takes a half-century--of their Marxism, but the war will go on. Right here. Right here, it's taking place. Across all the face of America. The secret stakes keep going up. The active question is whether this Christ-inspired civilization will continue. All other questions fade before that."

"Including the bomb?"

"It's not the bomb that's going to destroy us. If it ever gets down to nukes, then we're merely incinerating the corpse of all that's been destroyed already. The bomb can't be used unless civilization dies first. Of course, that could happen. Our continuing existence may depend on resisting false perceptions of reality. The rise of Marxism is but a corollary to the fundamental historical condition of this century: false perception."

What a man of the cloth he would have made! The value of his words was so incontestable to himself that he did not question the size of his audience. I could have been one parishioner or five hundred and one: the sermon would not have altered. Each word offered its reverberation to his mind, if not to mine.

"It's sad," he said. "For milleniums, every attempt at civilization foundered because nations lacked the most essential information. Now, we lurch forward, overburdened by hordes of misinformation. Sometimes I think our future existence will hang on whether we can keep false information from proliferating too rapidly among us. For if this rate grows critically greater than our power to verify the facts, the distortions of information will choke us eventually. Harry, are you beginning to have some idea of how much our people are supposed to amount to in the scheme of things?"

I managed to mutter, "I'm not sure I see where you're heading."

"You just don't welcome it." He swallowed his brandy. "Our real duty is to become the mind of America."

I nodded. I had no idea whether I was ready to agree with him, but I nodded.

"There's absolutely no reason," he said, "why the Company can't get there. Already, we tap into everything. If good crops are an instrument of foreign policy, then we are obliged to know next year's weather. That same demand comes at us everywhere we look: finance, media, labor relations, economic production, film production, the thematic consequences of TV: Where is the end to all we can be legitimately interested in?"

Dwelling in an age of general systems, we are obliged to draw experts from all fields: bankers, psychiatrists, poison specialists, narcs, art experts, public relations people, trade unionists, hooligans, journalists--do you have a good idea how many journalists are on contract to us--do observe a little hush-hush on that one. Nobody knows how many pipelines we have into good places--how many Pentagon poobahs, commodores, congressmen, professors in assorted think tanks, soil erosion specialists, student leaders, diplomats, corporate lawyers, are giving us input. We're rich in our resources. You see, we had the great good luck to start all at once." He nodded. "For a bureaucratic organization, that's usually a disaster, but it worked for us. Not only were we seeded with some of our best OSS people, but we attracted good ambitious men from all over the place, State, the FBI, Treasury, Defense, Commerce--we raided them all. They all wanted to come to us. It could have been a disaster. Organizationally speaking, we were set up in a pyramid. But our personnel, as measured by their talent, give us the shape of a barrel. Enormous amounts of talent in the middle ranks with no way to rise. After all, the people at the top were also young. Relatively young, like myself. So a good many of the men who rushed to join our ranks five years ago, had to go out again. Now, they're all over the place."

"All over Washington?"

"All over America. Once you've been in the Company, you don't really want to quit it altogether. It's tedious to work in those financial and business worlds. I tell you, we have liaison into every game that's going on in this country. Potentially, we can give direction to the land." He smiled. "Feeling tired?"

"No, sir."

"Didn't wear you out with the size of the mural?"

"I'll be up all night."

"Good for you." He smiled. "Let's have one more drink before you go. I want you to understand something. I don't get confidential very often, but from time to time, I will. You see, Harry, everyone in this Pickle Factory has a weakness. One fellow drinks too much. Another screws around heedlessly. A third is a closet queer. Either he brazened it through the polygraph, or turned queer later. A fourth smokes marijuana on the sly. My vice, old Harry Hubbard, old before your years, is that if I'm not careful, I talk too much. I'm choked with too many secrets, so I have insufficient room to think. Kittredge is in place to take up the slack, but the intimate truth is that she's a closet babbler just like me. So I've chosen you. You'd be a handsome fellow, Harry, if you didn't look a little

like a clam. I think I'll trust that look. One does get the feeling while speaking to you that it all goes down into the deepest vault you've got. So, yes, I'll talk to you from time to time, and Heaven help you if you don't keep it to yourself."

He took a full draw on his Churchill and let the smoke surround him as he let it out. "What did you think of our Dr. Schneider?" he asked.

I had the sense to be brief. "I would," I said, "read him as an ex-Nazi in a wig. I think he must be ten years younger than his false white hair, and he may know less about concert recitals than dead-drops."

"It's tempting," said Harlot, "to tell you more. But I'm afraid I can't let you in."

"Despite what you just said?" I was as suddenly hungry for secrets about Dr. Schneider as a hound called back from his food.

"Well," said Harlot, "there's no remedy. Perhaps you'll discover him for yourself one of these days." He took a puff again. He was enjoying my frustration. "Harry," said Harlot, "keep the faith."

The first part of my career was assigned to a job in Washington, D.C.

Then came another disappointment. I was not selected for any of the foreign desks. That was the worst possible thing getting on business post. An assistant to the First Desk in Washington could expect to see learning the ropes for Teheran, Peking for the Congo Desk and the Japanese, the Italian Desk, and the Chinese. It was generally agreed among junior-officer trainees at the Farm that if you had to learn in Washington, Assistant to the First Officer was the best job.

Now, I was not an ambitious young politician. I was--it is not over-emphasized to say again--young in spirit, but I had enough of my mother's social training to know I had been invited to the wrong party. I landed in the stable job, also known as

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Let me descend from the heights of Harlot's confidence in me to the low information on how I spent my working day. If I had finished training with high hopes for my immediate future, having spent many a night at the Farm discussing the best station to be sent to; if the merits of Vienna and Singapore and Buenos Aires and Ankara and Moscow, Teheran, Tokyo, Manila, Prague, Budapest, Nairobi, or Berlin had been weighed for their qualities as the most lively spot for commencing one's career,

was not, unfortunately not for October. On either side, six

I, like most of my class, was assigned to a job in Washington, D.C.

Then came another disappointment. I was not selected for any of the foreign desks. That was the usual prelude to getting an overseas post. An assistant to the Iran Desk in Washington could assume he was learning the ropes for Teheran. Ditto for the Congo Desk and the Japanese, the Polish Desk, and the Chilean. It was generally agreed among junior-officer trainees at the Farm, that if you had to begin in Washington, Assistant to the Desk Officer was the best job.

Now, I was not an ambitious young politician, I was--if it is not over-wearisome to say again-- eager to serve, but I had enough of my mother's social sense to know I had been invited to the wrong party. I landed in the Snake Pit, also known as the Boiler Room, the Coal Bin, or the Quarry. Trapped in an unrewarding job, synonyms proliferate. I chose to call our Snake Pit, the Bunker. It felt as if hundred of people were bunking there. In a huge room whose fluorescent lights droned away under a relatively low ceiling, in the very small draft of a few modest air conditioners situated in little windows on a far-off wall, we bumped and maneuvered around one another down aisles that were always too narrow for their human traffic. It was hot, unseasonably hot for October. On either side, six

feet high, were old fashioned wooden cabinets with shelves and file boxes. It was worse than the stacks in any large library. There, one had the hope of locating a book. We were, on average assignment, trying to collect whatever information was available for a specific person.

We had a Document Room adjoining the Bunker, a large chamber, stuffed with stacks of documents containing names yet to be perused by any of us. The stacks grew to the ceiling. The names encountered in each pamphlet, station report, agent report, magazine reference, newspaper reference, trade journal, or book, were supposed to be set down on a card with a summary of the information contained. After which, the card could be filed, and the document stored more permanently. The theory at the core of such labors was to be able to look at all the information available on any person the Company might be interested in. By such means, telling profiles could be formed. We were working on the great pyramid of the full dossier.

It was chaos, however. Documents accumulated faster than we could card them. The Western Hemisphere Division was soon six months behind a tower of paper in the Document Room; Soviet Russia was four; China (given the difficulty of ideographs), a year and a half. For West Germany, to which I was assigned,

tell me who VQ/WILDBOAR might be. Cryptonyms could be changed, however, and then Bridge-Archive would fall a few days in arrears. On this morning, however, VQ/WILDBOAR did translate into Wolfgang-from-West-Germany, last name unknown, last address Wasserspiegelstrasse 158, Hamburg. That, at least, was a start. Back at the other end of the Bunker, I could continue my search through the two file boxes--each twenty inches long, each containing something like eighteen hundred index cards, stuffed with Wolfgangs who had been sufficiently inconsiderate to provide us with no last name. Wolfgangs who offered the courtesy of a last initial, a Wolfgang F., or a Wolfgang G., took up another three file boxes. Wolfgangs with a whole last name occupied ten. I did not know that so many Wolfgangs were interesting to us in West Germany!

Then I discovered they were not. My Wolfgang-from-Hamburg, assuming I could locate him, had been entitled to one card in the Snake Pit for the occasion on which he was arrested in 1952 after heaving a brick during a street demonstration in Bonn. Yet he had nothing less than fifteen such entries, carded from fifteen separate West German newspapers which reprinted the same West German wire service story that carried no more than his first name. Absolutely invaluable stuff on my Wolfgang might well be lying somewhere in the Document room at

the other end of this interminable shed, but it had not yet been carded. I was, by now, irritable. In the lunch break, I sent back a cable to the office of Chief of Base, West Berlin. "NOT ABLE TO SATISFY REQUEST FOR BIO ENTRIES RE: VQ/WILDBOAR. NEED BETTER ADDRESS. VQ/CLOAKROOM." It was my first cable out. My first use of my own cryptonym.

At end of day, an answer was routed back to me. "CABLE 51--(SERIES RB 100 A). TO KU/CLOAKROOM: MOST RECENT, REPEAT AND UNDERLINE, MOST RECENT INFORMATION ON VQ/WILDBOAR IS OF THE ESSENTIAL, REPEAT, ESSENTIAL. ARE YOU INEPT? SHOW A SHARPER NOSE, FILE-RAT, FOR THE CHEESE. VQ/GIBLETS."

The Chief of Base in Berlin was famous for his acerbity, and I had no idea what to do next. If the situation did not improve, I could conceivably receive a Notice of Censure. It left me full of unspoken rage at Harlot. He had left me marooned in the Snake Pit. Others in my training group were sited already at some of the best Desks in Washington, Rosen was in Technical Services, a super-secret plum--was that due to his performance on the night of interrogation? Worse, Dix Butler, as I learned by way of Rosen, was actually operating out of West Berlin. Just when my mood felt condemned for the night--where is Wolfgang, and what would I do tomorrow?--I received a phone call from my father. Heading up something big

and unnameable in Tokyo, as I learned from his first remarks, he was reporting back to Washington after a visit to stations in Manila, Singapore, Rangoon, and Djakarta. "Join me for dinner," he said right off. "We'll celebrate your release from the Farm. Montague's coming with us."

"Terrific," I said. I would have preferred to see him alone.

"Yes," said my father, "Hugh knows I've got the jam on all the doings in the Far East. You watch, he'll be dying to know. Keep one item secret from Hugh, and he carries on like you're picking his pocket."

Well, we had a rich dinner. Harlot insisted on bringing us to Sans Souci, a habit he would continue through the years. Whenever I was back in Washington and we had lunch or dinner, it was invariably at Sans Souci. Later I learned there were other people he took to Harvey's, or to the Army and Navy Club, or whatever was the appropriate institution for the relation.

That night a good deal of maneuvering went on between Cal and Harlot. I could hardly follow the shop-talk about Sumatra, and SEATO, and the rigors of getting a little intelligence of our own out of Singapore without ruffling the Raj. When Harlot asked, however, "How do you plan to hold Sukarno's feet to the

fire?" my father leaned forward, touched my elbow with his, and replied, "Hugh, that's just what we won't get into."

"Of course not. You'll listen to some total fool out there who's covering every last one of his bases and hasn't idea one on how to proceed, but you won't take a chance with me."

"Hugh, I can't."

"I see where it's leading. I sniff it. You're going to try to photograph Sukarno in one or another of his sexual circuses."

"Throwing no stones," said my father, "he's certainly got a few."

"You're on squander-time. It's madness. You can't trap Buddhists with sex. They place it somewhere between eating and evacuating. Part of the comedy of what goes in, and what comes out. You'll need more than photographs to get Sukarno into your pouch."

"The only alternative is the Colonels," said my father.

"I don't know that they're honest dinner guests."

Such talk went on. I certainly couldn't swear to what they were contesting, but I thought it wonderfully interesting. This was the style with which I would carry on conversations before too many years went by. Since I was still in dread of

tomorrow's work at the Bunker chasing after Wolfgang, my stomach was raw, and my spirit was full of bile. Harlot and Cal had taken, after the smallest acknowledgement, no further recognition of my last six months of training, and my graduation from the Farm. Nor had they given me room to talk about my present condition. After three martinis, I had begun to pack veal-roulade into my gorge with a red burgundy whose nature seemed more complex than my own. Add Courvoisier, and the attempt to smoke a Churchill with panache, and what I had hoped would be a party of celebration (and possible explanation for why I had been marooned in the Bunker) was now becoming a long march of gastro-intestinal fortitude. I lost interest in Sukarno and how they would hold his feet to the fire.

Beneath it all, I was feeling the same sure resentment my father always stirred. Sad cry: He had no desire to see me for myself alone. I was his adjunct to business, pleasure, or duty. So, despite my physical discomforts, heavy as thunderclouds, I felt the same rush of love my father could also stir in me when he said at last, "I'm really waiting to hear about you, boy."

"There's not much to tell."

"He's in the Snake Pit," said Harlot.

By my father's pause, I could tell this came as unexpected information. "Well, that's a hell of a place to have him."

"No. It's advisable."

"You put him there?"

"I didn't keep it from happening." Harlot gave my father the value of his own full pause, and added, "In truth, I suppose I encouraged it."

"Why? Did he do that badly at the Farm?"

"No. He landed in the top quarter of his class."

"Good."

"Not good, adequate."

All this, of course, was being said in front of me.

"Then why do you have him in Files?"

"Because I want to send him to Berlin. It's an interesting place right now."

"I know all about Berlin. I agree. But why isn't he working at West German Desk?"

"Because it can be fatal to anyone's young fortunes to step into that slot. Four promising kids have come and gone in the last three months. Harvey chews them up before they have time to learn."

My father nodded. He puffed on his cigar. He sipped his brandy. He took this much time to say in effect that he was a

Far Eastern hand and did not know all that much about what was closer to home.

"I want," said Hugh, "for you to write a letter to Harvey. A puff for Harry. Tell him what a great son you've got. Harvey respects you, Cal."

This Bill Harvey, I could recognize, was the same Chief of Base, West Berlin, who had called me a file-rat. Why did Harlot think I should work for him? I was, despite the last full lecture imparted at the canal house, not without suspicions.

Perhaps it was the uncertain state of my liver, but my unhappy stomach could not hold its own bad news much longer. I told them of Harvey's cable; I repeated his unforgettable metaphor about the cheese.

"I'm no longer," I said, "exactly anonymous. He knows there's a guy named KU/CLOAKROOM who didn't produce what he wanted on VQ/WILDBOAR."

They laughed. They could have been brothers for the way they laughed together.

"Well," said Cal, "KU/CLOAKROOM is going to disappear."

"Drink to the new fellow," said Harlot. "Got a preference for him?"

"KU/RENDEZVOUS?" I proposed.

"Much too salient. Get over into the gray. Let's start with KU/ROPES."

I didn't like that persona any more than CLOAKROOM, but I discovered it didn't matter. It was explained to me that just as laundered money grew cleaner with each new bank it was deposited into, so did each change of cryptonym remove you farther from the scene of a fiasco. My cryptonym would soon be taken from KU/ROPES to DN/FRAGMENT, then, over to SM/ONION. Last stop: KU/STAIRS. Harlot jotted down these names with little self-congratulatory clicks of the tongue, while my father chuckled in approval. They were cooking a dish.

"I don't know how it works," I protested.

"Worry not. Once I get this through, odds against discovery will go up to something like 10,000 to 1," said Harlot.

It still seemed to me that all it would take for Mr. William Harvey, Chief of Base in West Berlin, to find out who KU/CLOAKROOM was, would be to ask the West German Desk in Washington to get my real name over to him in a hurry.

No, my father assured me, it couldn't happen that way.

Why?

"Because," said Harlot, "we are dealing with bureaucrats."

"Harvey?" I asked.

"Oh, no. The people between Harvey and you. They won't see any reason to violate their rules of procedure. If West German Desk here at Headquarters is asked to furnish the identity of KU/CLOAKROOM to Chief of Base, West Berlin, West German Desk must apply first to Bridge-Archive. Bridge-Archive, in turn, will discover that KU/CLOAKROOM has just been given a shift to KU/ROPES. Well, that means delay for West German Desk. Any alteration of cryptonym invokes a seventy-two hour elapse before translation can occur. This protective regulation is a perfectly good one, by the way. Such change took place, presumably, for some valid purpose. At this point, West German Desk probably decides to wait these three days. It's a minor search, after all. Unless they're petrified of Harvey, they will stall. He's over in Berlin, and, for that matter, West German Station is in Bonn. West German Desk is working first for West German Station, not Chief of Base in Berlin. They're just accommodating Harvey."

"Isn't the Base in West Berlin more important than the West German Station in Bonn?" I asked my father.

"Well, Bonn does have the Soviet Russia Division, but I'd say Berlin, on balance, is more important. Only we're not talking about real clout. We're dealing with bureaucracy. That's a whole other kingdom."

"Count on it," said Harlot. "If Bill Harvey insists on immediate processing of his request, which is highly unlikely, because he's bound to be mad at somebody else by tomorrow--it's another day, after all--West German Desk still won't be able to satisfy him directly. They will have to go up a step higher to Bridge-Archive:Control. Right there, they will meet a STOP. I will have put it in. STOP will say: 'Wait your seventy-two hours.' If they don't want to, they have to take it up even higher to Bridge-Archive:Control--Senior. Now, that is a committee, not a man. Bridge-Archive:Control--Senior meets only for emergencies. I happen to be on the committee. One never presumes on Bridge-Archive:Control--Senior unless one can prove extraordinary need-to-know. Moguls and imams do not like being pulled in for a needless meeting."

He puffed with complete happiness on his Churchill. "Obviously, you're safe enough for seventy-two hours. In the interim, we will switch your cryptonym from KU/ROPES to DN/FRAGMENT. That means West German Desk will have to wait three more days for Bridge-Archive to process KU/ROPES. In other words, far from discovering who KU/CLOAKROOM is, West German Desk will be waiting to learn what cryptonym KU/ROPES has just been shifted to. They're still not near anything, you see."

"On top of that," said my father, "DN is South Korea."

"Yes," said Harlot. "KU/ROPES has gone to South Korea and become DN/FRAGMENT. On paper, at least. Of course, an overseas cryptonym puts a two-week hold on Bridge-Archive. By then, Harvey, we can predict, will be well on to other things. Nonetheless, as a matter of pride, I believe in carrying these matters out properly. If Harvey, for any reason, becomes obsessed with finding out who you are, which is always a possibility, and waits the two weeks, I promise that at the end of such interval, you will be shifted over to London as SM/ONION. Still on paper, of course. A fortnight further down the road, we will bring you figuratively back from London to the U.S. which, dear boy, you have not left in the first place. But we'll have you back working as KU/STAIRS. Total write-off for Harvey at that point. He will see that a signature is on this business. It will tell Bill Harvey to lay off. He's obviously tampering with something in the fuse system. No ordinary file-clerk is going to get three cryptonyms in one month including junkets to South Korea and London with protective STOPS from Bridge-Archive:Control. So it's our way of saying to Bill Harvey: Bug off. Big guns are in place."

It seemed clear enough to me. I would be safe. But why were they going to such pains?

My father must have been enough of a parent to read my cerebations. "We're doing it because we like you," he said.

"And because we like doing it," said Harlot. He nudged the ash from his cigar onto a clean plate as carefully as he might roll an uncooked egg with his forefinger. "I'll also have to get," he said, "KU/CLOAKROOM expunged from your 201. Then there'll be no record at all."

"I appreciate the troubles you're taking on," I said, "but, after all, I committed no crime. It's not my fault if the Document Room is buried in backlog."

"Well," said Harlot, "by my measure, it is your fault. The first rule in this place, if you value the size of the future contribution you want to make, is to protect yourself when young. If some mogul sends down a request for information, supply it."

"Was I supposed to tunnel through ten thousand cubic feet of uncarded documents?"

"Wolfgang was a student in a street gang, and he moved around a lot. You could have made up a report that kept him moving a little more. Send him to Frankfurt, or over to Essen."

"Maybe," said my father, "Rick should still do that."

"No," said Harlot. "Too late. It won't work now. Too much attention will be paid to the false information. But the point for my godson to recognize is that in the beginning Harvey was not asking for a serious inquiry."

"How can you be certain of that?" I asked.

"If Chief of Base in West Berlin is not aware of the frightful condition of the Snake Pit, he is incompetent. William King Harvey is not incompetent. He knew, given the chaos, there would be nothing up to date on VQ/WILDBOAR. I would say he sent the cable, and put his name to it, mind you, to scorch some of his people in Berlin. They probably lost contact with Wolfgang. It's a slap in the face for them if our file system on Berlin does the job for them. They are in place over there, after all. If you had provided some fiction for Wolfgang's travels, Harvey could have used it to stir up a little action with his principals and their agents. 'See,' he would tell them, 'Wolfgang has gone back to Frankfurt.' 'Impossible,' they might answer. 'He's too recognizable in Frankfurt.' 'All right,' Harvey could have answered, 'get cracking and find him.'"

I could not keep myself from saying, "What if it was urgent to find Wolfgang? What if he"--I showed, I fear, a

wholly callow spirit--"what if he was about to pass some nuclear secrets on to the Russians?"

"It doesn't matter," said Harlot. "We've lost it at that point. We're lumbered. The world ends because the Document Room is an impacted mass."

My father, however, took a long look at Hugh Montague and something was exchanged between them. Harlot sighed. "In fact," he said, "there is one larger-than-life secret in West Berlin, and I may have to let you in on it before you go over. If you don't have any idea of what it is, you could get in Harvey's way." He sighed again. "It's a thousand to one that Wolfgang has nothing to do with Larger-Than-Life, but if he does, we'll know about it soon enough."

"How?"

Hugh sniffed another measure of that air of the judicious and the corrupt which is common to courtroom corridors and cigars, and said, "We'll get you out of the Snake Pit tomorrow, and on to intensive training in German." That was all the answer provided.

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After we separated from Harlot, my father proposed that I stay with him for the night. He was living, he told me, at a friend's apartment off K Street and 16th, "an old hand in an old apartment," my father said in passing, and when we went up, I was struck with how shabby were the furnishings. It spoke of what little income an "old hand" without private funds could count on in the Company; it also reminded me how pinch-fisted Hubbards could be. My father was certainly able to afford a decent hotel, yet chose to bunk here instead--I hardly knew if

He now waved me into one of the two dusty armchairs, and opened a kitchen cupboard to come forth with a half bottle of cheap Scotch which we had to drink with water, no cubes. He had turned on the refrigerator, however, and it was humming loudly enough to discourage any microphone hidden anywhere about. I was, at this point, highly sensitive to the possible presence of sneakies, inasmuch as one of the courses back at the Reflecting Pool which I did not expatiate upon, was in electronic surveillance, and I wondered if my father's quick tapping of his fingernails against the end-table by the side of his chair came from nervousness, fatigue, or his long-trained habit to send out sufficient noise to discourage any but the most advanced listening devices. Of course, I had even less idea whether I was being too paranoid or insufficiently so, and the evening with Harlot had not relaxed my cautions.

"I want to talk to you about Hugh and Bill Harvey," said my father. "Hugh means a good deal to me, but I have to tell you--he's not perfect. It's damnable, because he's almost perfect, if you know what I mean."

"I don't."

"Well, when people get up to 98%, it hurts out of proportion if they can't reach those last two points. Hugh may be the best man we have in the Company. He's the most

brilliant, and certainly one of the more scholarly, and he has guts. He's a real cross between a panther and a mountain goat. Don't get him angry, and don't dare him to leap."

"Yessir," I said, "I have a very high opinion of him."

"I don't mind if he takes his own leaps, but I'm not sure he isn't asking you to go along with him on this one."

"To do what?"

He threw up his hands as if to apologize for not being able to tell me.

"Does it concern the larger-than-life secret?"

He coughed heavily with an unhappy subterranean sound as if a considerable mucus were ravaging his powerful chest. My father was still in his late forties, but the sound of this cough, filled with the gravel of booze and nicotine, seemed to have come from a much older man concealed within that powerful body. "Yes," he said. "Hugh should not have brought the matter up. I know I won't tell you, and I wouldn't even if I could because I don't want you to bear the responsibility of holding such a weighty secret, a true secret of state. Tell me, then, why Hugh figures he can feed it to you as part of your orientation?"

There was obviously no answer to that.

"He will certainly tell you," my father went on. "Don't repeat this to a soul, but he lets more secrets out than anyone in his position ever should. It's as if he's making a bet on his own judgement. It gives him the grandest feeling."

I think my father may have finally had his fill of drink for I could feel him meandering away from me in his mind, but unsteadily, so that he sat up with a jerk. "The point is, Hugh has no right to trust anyone after Philby. You've heard about Kim Philby?"

"A little," I said, recalling Lord Robert's comments on the subject.

"Philby came close to being Hugh's nemesis. When Burgess and Maclean pulled their disappearance back in 1951, everybody divided into camps. I don't know that we've ever had a greater shock at work. Did Philby pass the word to Burgess and Maclean, or did he not? Old friends weren't speaking because one thought Philby was guilty and the other wasn't ready to swear to it."

"Which camp were you in?"

"Pro-Philby. Same as Hugh. Kim Philby was a friend of Hugh's, and he was a friend of mine. We used to drink together in London during the war. You'd swear Philby was the peachiest guy you ever met. Had a stammer. But very funny when he could

get the words out. Which he could, when drunk." After which my father suddenly went silent.

I waited, but he said no more. Then, he yawned. "I'm ready to turn in," he said. "I caught this bug in Djakarta--a hellzapopper of a bug. I wonder what it looks like under the microscope?" He smiled in superiority to his own physical defects, and added, "Let's not get into Kim Philby now. It's too depressing. The point is, Hugh ended up looking pretty bad when it was over. The anti-Philby people clearly won out. That was Bill Harvey's doing. When Hugh tells the story, and I think he will if you ask him, he'll pretend to be half-fond of Harvey. He has to. By now, we're just about certain that Philby was working for the KGB. So Hugh has to say half-decent things about Harvey. Don't believe him. He hates Bill Harvey."

"Then why am I being sent to Berlin?" I wanted to ask.

"Nonetheless," said my father, as if I had in fact spoken aloud, "Berlin's a good idea. I will write that letter. You could use some roughing up. Bill Harvey's the man to give it to you."

With that, I was left to turn in for the night. There were two single beds in the next room and sheets and blankets of a sort. I lay there listening to my father cry out from

time to time in his slumber, a short barking sound, and I finally slept in a half-coma which commenced with visions of Bill Harvey through Kittredge's eyes. She had certainly described him once. "We know a man in the Company, awful person, who carries a handgun in a shoulder-holster even when he comes to dinner. Isn't that so, Hugh?"

"Yes."

"Harry, he's built like a pear, narrow shoulders and a relatively thick middle. His head's the same way. Pear-shaped. He has goggle eyes. An absolute frog, this man, but I couldn't help noticing. He has the prettiest little mouth. Small and nicely curved. Very well-shaped. A glamour-girl's mouth in a toad's face. That sort of thing tells you even more about Alpha and Omega than the right and left side of the face."

Had it been Bill Harvey who confronted me at the edge of sleep? I had a curious experience that night, and it was far from wholly unpleasant. I felt West Berlin coming nearer to my life. My first foreign tour was awaiting me. Even this grim safe-house with its olfactory echo of old cigarettes and wet cigar butts, its memories of men waiting for other men to arrive, was a harbinger of the years to come. My loneliness could serve much purpose. The mean appurtenances of this gray

apartment, spectral by the street light that came through the window-shades, brown as old newspapers, gave me, perversely, a sense of substance. I knew why my father chose to stay here for his few days in Washington rather than at a hotel. A safe-house was the emblem of our profession, our monk's cell, fortified by rites and customs. If my father would let me into a good deal on other matters, he still had to offer the transparent fiction that this was a friend's apartment. By penetrating his cover story, I would add to his pedagogical powers as a father: he would be enabling me to see a safe-house with eyes of discovery, and therefore with respect. I was convinced that many a rendezvous in West Berlin would look like this, and I was to prove right.

Let me confess the real vanity of my half-dream, my ghoulish meditation. I felt equipped to travel through dark spaces and engage in deeds not free of the odor of burning sulphur. Lying but a few feet away from my father's troubled body, sensing the size of the specters that would force a man as strong as himself to cry out in such barking sounds as if warning off nocturnal enemies, I thought of my unspoken taste for caverns, including that underground city of excavated rooms whose plans I had drawn as a boy. Now, I thought again of the cavern in my own head where, whatever the surgeons had removed

from my brain, whatever half-formed monsters of harsh tissue or imperfect flesh had been uprooted, some spiritually unfilled space had also been left behind, some spiritual cavern. For even as the death of a malformed birth may leave a space in the cosmos, this hole in the tissue of my experience (whose true surgeon had been my father, sleeping in unrest beside me) might be precisely what drew me now toward all the strange places that lay ahead.

At that moment, I thought of Harlot with love. He believed that our work could shift the massive weight of historical drift by the only lever our heavens had given us, the readiness to dare damnation in our soul. We were here to challenge evil, negotiate its snares, embroil ourselves in devious activities so far removed from the clear field of all we had been taught that one could never see the light at the end of such a crooked tunnel. Not when one was in the middle.

On just this thought, I fell asleep. I did not know that my reverie had produced a revelatory metaphor. Indeed, the larger-than-life secret of West Berlin which my father could not pass on to me concerned nothing less than the fifteen-hundred foot tunnel dug in holy secrecy, under Harvey's supervision, into East Berlin for the purpose of tapping Soviet military headquarter's long telephone lines out to Moscow.

I did not, as I say, encounter Bill Harvey until I had been in West Berlin for a few weeks, but he was often in my imagination the first days abroad, since I heard much about him before I left. Harlot not only gave an account of a fateful party in Washington that Kim Philby threw for Guy Burgess, but the larger-than-life was also passed on to me--even as my father had predicted--all the fathoms-deep hush-hush about William King Harvey's unwhisperable and unutterable tunnel. That I thought was the true farewell gift. My father might

have said Harlot was taking bets on his own judgement, but I saw such generosity as kin to the Vow; Harlot was accepting me into the inner house of the Company. Implicit in this gift had to be the assumption that I would help to lead the Company in years to come, and would understand the burden of such honors for I had borne them from the start.

The Douglas C-124 that took me from Andrews Air Force Base to Tempelhof in West Berlin was a fat four-motor Globemaster called "Old Shakey," and it vibrated like a rusty radiator. You mounted this plane from a ramp in the rear, and those twenty of us who were on our way to Europe, Air Force personnel for the most part, were sent up into the cargo-well forward of the vehicles and crates that would be loaded on after. Strapped into our seats, we faced to the stern and looked down on the cargo whose neatly-packed contents took up considerably more room than ourselves, and seemed, by comparison, more respected in treatment.

The flight took nine hours to Mildenhall in England where we stopped for another nine hours before moving on to Mannheim and Berlin. I was on that plane, or waiting for it to go up again, a total of twenty-four hours, and the interior was unheated, and had no view. I stared at electrical cables on the cabin walls. It was the longest trip.

After attempts to read in the poor cabin light had failed, and conversation with men on either side of me had ground down, (for I was discovering again how circumscribed was conversation with people who were not in the Agency) I reached at last, somewhere in the middle of the night, an island of meditation sufficiently removed from the grinding of the airplane's motors and the vibration of the cabin, to be able to dwell on my last memory of Washington, a farewell dinner alone with Harlot at Sans Souci.

He told anecdotes all night, filling me in on what he obviously considered the true flavor of the Company. It was as if, after all my training with motley instructors, and those demoralizing days on the files, which would soon be simplified, he promised me--"for now, under the coming reform, they will tear up two cards for every one they create--you see, Herrick, the King of France has forty thousand men--he marches them up the hill and then he marches them down again." Yes, Herrick, said this presentation, we plod, we mess up, we go in circles, and expand too quickly here, and are egregiously out of it there, but it's the people who count, the one hundred, two hundred, at most five hundred people, who are the active, lively nerve of the Company. All those thousands of others are but the insulation we need, our own corps of bureaucrats, so to speak: They are there to keep the other Washington

bureaucracies away from us. At the center, however, it can be splendid.

"The only real problem," he said, looking into his brandy, "is to spot the devil when you see him. The devil, after all, is the most beautiful creature God ever made, and that is a remark I often repeat. It reminds me of Kim Philby. What a devil! Have I ever given you the go on Harvey's night at Philby's party?"

He knew he hadn't. He was launching another anecdote. It may have been the Armagnac, but a vein in Harlot's forehead began to throb prominently. "I don't know," he said, "if any Englishman who came over here from MI-6 or the British Foreign office was ever more popular than Kim Philby. A good many of us got to know him around London during the War, and we took up the friendship again when he arrived in 1949. We used to have the most splendid lunches. He was shy with strangers because of that frightful stammer, but such an agreeable man. Something sandy about him, the hair, the jacket, the old speckled pipe. He drank like a loon, never showed it. You have to respect that. It suggests an intensity of purpose when you can handle all that drink. Harry, I try, as you know, to eschew sentimental exaggeration, but Kim Philby had a quality the English produce in many of their best people. They seem to

embody in their own person everything that's first rate about their country, or, at least, everything worth giving you a hint of. He was our Englishman. And, of course, we had the word. Kim Philby was bound to head up MI-6 one of these days.

"Now, of course, it wasn't altogether as good fellow as that. During the War, MI-6 used to treat us in OSS as if, when it came to Intelligence, we Americans were good-natured oafs who did well to kneel at the feet of British savvy. They gave us a hard snobby time. 'You chaps may be the plutocrats, but, don't you know, we still have this.' And they would tap their brow. We hated that, and admired them more than we wanted to. We were awfully in awe of them. We were so young at Intelligence. When Philby came to Washington in '49, it was still a bit like that. We were expanding the Company every day, and it was obvious the British were going to end up in our shadow, but, oh, that little nod of the head, that paper-thin smile. They had it. I used to study Kim Philby. Such filigree. There he was, his poor country to our wealthy one, and him stammering half the time, yet the best of us felt that competitive little minus when we had to go face to face.

"The thing about Kim--my God, just in saying his name I discover I'm still egregiously fond of Philby--is that he was

audacious. True wit resides in audacity. You have to know when to break away from the book-move. After the British Foreign Office posted Guy Burgess from London to Washington with the rank of First Secretary, Philby invited Guy to move in with him. Now, looking back on it, I still don't comprehend how the Russians dared to put up with Burgess. He had to be the most improbable KGB asset. He was, as you may have heard, a holy roaring incommensurate mess, a homosexual of the worst sort, a bully on the prowl for slender fellows ready to turn queer. 'I'm going to plunder you,' is the kind of look came off Guy Burgess. You did not measure his drinking by glasses, but by bottles. He also smoked like a Rube Goldberg filthy-nicotine machine. Besides which, he wore white clothes considerably clotted with his last half-dozen meals. He was half as grand as Randolph Churchill, and had manners absolutely as bad. One has to expect Englishmen from good families to be awful with waiters. They must be seeking to pay back all those Scotch nannies who used to shovel porridge into their mouths. But, Burgess was the worst. 'See here, you bloody fucking fool,' he would bellow at the nearest waiter, 'are you a cretin, or merely presenting yourself as hopelessly inadequate?'" Hugh, imitating Burgess, spoke loudly enough to

have embarrassed us if Sans Souci had been empty, but dinner-clamor was our security.

"Philby would always reassure us, 'Guy has been suffering through the most frightful after-effects of his car accident, poor Guy,' Philby would say, 'Guy is talented, but his head is b-b-b-banged-up, you see.' Philby made it sound like a war wound. The loyalty of one Brit for another, I used to tell myself!

"Well, enter Bill Harvey. He had the curious luck, to be invited to Philby's one night in Spring, 1951, for a large dinner. Everybody was there, Harvey, Burgess, hoards of us poobahs and our ladies. J. Edgar Buddha almost came, but then he heard about Harvey's being invited, and didn't show. Bill Harvey, to bring you a little more into the picture, was at that time very much en route to becoming our in-house pet. Since then, he's become considerably more than a toy. But at that time, we, over at the Office of Special Operations, loved him. We'd taken him up. Maybe he was a cold-sweat compulsive--his handshake was even clammier than his pistol butt--but he was our FBI man. To get started in business, we had, of course, done our best to raid the Bureau, and signed on a few of their agents, among whom Harvey was the cream. You know he'd helped to snag the Rosenbergs. J. Edgar Buddha never

forgave him for having dared to leave the marble halls of Justice to come over to us. Then to make matters worse: Harvey was keeping his deep contacts at FBI, and stealing a lot of back-drawer stuff for us from the Bureau. They deserved no less. The FBI happened to be poaching on CIA jurisdictions in about seven countries along about then. In fact, they were hoping to kill us in our infancy. It was inhumane! Why, Allen Dulles could hardly get through to Buddha on the phone. 'Tell me,' he once asked Hoover, 'what is CIA doing to offend you?'

"'Mr. Dulles,' J. Edgar replies, 'tell Bill Harvey to quit stealing our stuff.'

"Well, that puts Harvey in our graces more than ever. Naturally, Philby invites Bill and his good wife, Libby, to dinner. He was married to Libby then. Now, it's some other woman. I could have warned Philby not to give such an invitation. I was not all that sanguine about the social prospects. When you put a plain like Bill Harvey alongside a fancy like Guy Burgess, Heaven may not be able to help.

"Well, we all start drinking. Harvey can go round for round with Burgess. So can Libby. Harvey's wife is out of Indiana or Kentucky, or whatever, some agricultural seat, a sexy-mousy girl with no presence at all, I fear, except for a huge horse-laugh that's so bad and so crude it could only

belong to a duchess. No scullery maid would ever be allowed to guffaw like that. Whoopee! We all get five yards under. It's a revel. Harvey has been boasting up and down Foggy Bottom that he has had sexual intercourse every day of his life since some such tender age as twelve. So help me. If it can't be his wife, he implies, it might be yours. And Libby is not only kissing everyone at the party--'Here's mud in your eye,' she keeps yelling--but is also carrying on with, of all people, Guy Burgess. Guy even takes his hands off the boy he's towed along to play car-bumpers with her rump. Under it all, is this desperate, pervasive wash of what I call social sorrow. It's insufficiently recognized as one of the major passions. Harvey and Libby are full of social sorrow because in relation to the rest, they're crude fare. They know damned well that no amount of rump-bumping is going to lower the real barriers.

"Burgess starts to brag about his powers as a caricaturist. 'Draw me,' asks Libby. 'Oh, I'll do that, darling,' says Burgess. He makes a sketch of Libby. Shows it to me first. I pride myself on keeping a few wits together under tricky circumstances--but I tell you, Harry, I wasn't able to say a word. Burgess drew Libby too well. There she is in an armchair with her legs apart, skirts up, her fingers right where you know they'll be--he's even drawn her pubic hair

with attention to detail. She's got an expression on her face you can't mistake. It's how she must look at avalanche time. Burgess is a percipient devil!

"Now, just as I take this drawing in, Burgess whips it from my hand, and passes it around. Most people are decent enough to pop no more than a quick peek, but no one, by now, really wants to bury it. We've put up with a lot from Bill Harvey. We are, in fact, surprisingly ready to be the chorus to witness Agamemnon's woe. So we follow Bill Harvey with our eyes. He walks across the room, intercepts the drawing, and--I thought his heart would burst. I also passed through an instant when I wondered if he was about to draw his gun. I could feel the impulse clear across the room. Holding on to himself with an effort of will worthy of a boa-constrictor's embrace, he seizes Libby's hand--by now, she's seen the drawing, too, and is wailing--and walks out with her. I have never witnessed any look of hatred equal to the bolt Bill Harvey threw at Burgess. 'I wish,' says Bill, 'I wish. . . .' He can't get it out. Then he does. 'Choke on a nigger's cock, you fuck,' says Bill Harvey, and is out the door.

"The man has just given his blessing," says Burgess.

"A month later Burgess is called back to London. From there he quickly decamps with Sir Donald Maclean for parts

unknown, but, of course, it can be no place but Moscow. Maclean, also stationed in America, had had the most godawful high clearance at Los Alamos. So, the question now was Philby. Could he possibly be working for the Soviets? We can't believe that. I tell you, he's too nice. I am hardly prepared, I'll confess to you. Philby and I had talked about a hell of a lot during those lunches we took together at--can you believe it--J. Edgar Hoover's favorite restaurant, Harvey's. No relation. I even got out a three-page memo more or less to exonerate Philby. Noblesse oblige. I was less witting then. My memo also spoke of Burgess: I related that Guy joined us at lunch one day in a soiled white British naval officer's uniform, wholly unshaven, and proceeded to carry on about 'the damned exaggerations and over-claims in the technical data on American Oldsmobile's blood-sucking fucking new overdrive!' Burgess knows a lot about automobiles; he tells me as much. Also, Burgess brags of having been to bed on countless occasions with Philby's male secretary. It's virtually an FBI memo, those three pages. I detest what I've written. Gossip, no grit. But Philby, on balance, comes through my ad hoc audit with more credits than debits.

"At this point, if not for Wild Bill Harvey, Kim might have weathered the storm. Possibly, given a few years, he

could have worked back into MI-6's good graces. Who, after all, ever heard of the KGB putting two of their agents into the same house? Kim must be innocent of everything but bad judgement.

"Harvey, however, had his own memo to write. He had been putting together fifteen and twenty hour stretches on the files. That's always the other side of Harvey. Hard work. He was also pulling in whatever he could obtain from the best FBI counter-intelligence. FBI had cracked a few Russian codes they were not about to share with us, but, old FBI buddies being what they are, Harvey did obtain one Soviet intercept that J. Edgar had been keeping under his monumental seat, and it made reference to a high British mole. The specifications fit Kim Philby well enough for the powers to accept Harvey's version rather than mine. 'Take back your Philby and try him,' CIA tells MI-6. Which they now had to do, much as they hated the prospect. Philby got a draw at his MI-6 hearing. No incarceration, but was obliged to resign. Poor Kim. I say 'poor Kim,' and yet, if he's guilty, he's the worst of all. In fact, I've come to the most reluctant conviction that he was KGB all the while."

Harlot took bitter savor of the Churchill before adding, "I'm afraid it was generally accepted that Harvey had proved

superior to me on this case. Do you know, it wasn't long before he accused your honorable godfather of being a Soviet agent. It's Alger Hiss time, don't forget. Joe McCarthy is getting his good start in life. The better your family antecedents, the worse, I must say, you now look. So I was asked to take a lie detector test. Now, I'm not built to answer sexual questions about myself. Of course, who is? A pimp, presumably. At any rate, I'm fluttered all over the place, but pass. No incurable heart disease. And Harvey is off to the races. He is now one of our larger people. Why do I tell you this story?"

"I'm not sure I know."

"Because the devil is the most beautiful creature God ever made. Drink to Kim Philby, a consummate swine. Drink to your new Chief, God's own wild boar, King William Harvey, I do mean, William King Harvey. He's no devil if beauty is the criterion."

Dix Butler had commandeered a Jeep to meet me at Tempelhof Airport. Once again, I would share accommodations with four Junior Officers and Dix was one of them. A few blocks off the Kurfürstendamm, in what was a substantial neighborhood before the war, our apartment was on the fourth floor of a six-story edifice still standing on its side of the street. In the stairwell, elaborate moldings, full of cracked plaster, gave way to board walls at the higher landings. Parquet floors showed swatches of linoleum. It was in accord with my first

impression of Berlin--dusty, heavy, not inelegant, half-patched, gray, depressed, yet surprisingly libidinous. I felt depravity on every street corner, as real to me as vermin and neon lights.

I do not wish to irritate the reader by one more reference to my sex life (which was still an empty ledger) except to say that I was reacting these days to the presence of sex like one of those devil's imp^S in a sealed cylinder who keeps rising up or falling in reflex to the heat of the hand which holds the tube. The sad truth--or is it the happy phenomenon?--is that as I came off the landing ramp from "Old Shakey," I had a unique experience. My first sight of the close-packed working class streets surrounding Tempelhof, produced an erection in me. Either the air, or the architecture of West Berlin, was an aphrodisiac.

"The only people not smart enough to spy for us in this town," Dix said, "are the spies. The women are all up for action. Asking a Berlin girl not to snoop, is like asking a grasshopper not to jump. I love it. These people are real," he said, as panoramas of West Berlin went flying by the window like war-time newsreels of bombed cities. I saw buildings in every stage of erection and demolition, half-destroyed, or going up in rubble-cleared lots that revealed the sheared-off

backs of buildings from the next street. Billboards, bulldozers, cranes, trucks, military vehicles were everywhere. It felt like one year after the war, not ten. "West Berliners have the quickest minds I ever ran into," said Dix. "New Yorkers are nothing compared to these people. I was trying to read a German newspaper on a park bench the other day, and this small neat dude in a pinstripe suit, professional type, is sitting across from me. He speaks up in perfect English, 'See that policeman over there?' I look. It's a cop, one more hefty Kraut. 'I see him,' I say. 'What's it to you, pal?' 'I bet,' says the stranger, 'that cop shits like an elephant.' Then he goes back to his newspaper. Berlin, Hubbard. They let you know how the cop squats."

"Are you sure?" I asked. "Maybe you missed a signal."

"Forget training," said Dix. I was now re-introduced to Butler's ability to offer a lecture. "What," he asked, "does the book say? When you go to your first meeting with a new agent, tell him no more than the address of the café where you are going to rendezvous next time. Then, do not appear. Telephone him instead to arrange a third meeting. Now, as he leaves the café, surveillance can spot if he is being shadowed. That's proper technique, correct?"

"It's what they taught us."

"Maybe for Moscow. Not here. No time here for that. We are sparrows picking seeds out of the horseballs. The horseshit is everywhere. Nazis on both sides. General Gehlen who runs BND for the West Germans is an ex-Nazi. He used to be financed by us. Regular contract and everything."

"Yes," I said, "I know that." Was it ten years ago, sitting at lunch in 21, that my father had spoken of a German general who had been able to strike an agreement with U.S. Army Intelligence after the war? "Yes, I heard of him," I said.

"He also," said butler, "got the word out to all the ex-Nazis who used to work with him on the Russian front. Continuation of the old war by new means, was the word. A lot of those guys jumped at the chance to find a good-paying job in post-war Germany. After all, the work was easier than it used to be. People in your family, if they had to live in the East Zone, could furnish you information. But that's all right. The Communists are just as enterprising as we are. Analyze the SSD, and you'll find East German Communists running it at the top, and half the Gestapo underneath. It's all bullshit, friend, and I'm having the time of my life."

Butler did not offer a word, however, on what my work might be. I was left to discover such details bit by bit. For my first few days in Berlin, I was occupied with obtaining