

THE
GODDESS
of
FORTUNE

A NOVEL

ANDREW BLENCOWE

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This novel is based on historic events; the characters and plot have been altered in part to combine fact and fiction.

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Dedicated to the memory of William Troeller

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Preface

ON A VERY HOT Sunday morning in June 1914, Gavrilo Princip ducked into a sandwich shop in Sarajevo for an early lunch a little before noon. Earlier that day he had failed to kill Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Outside the sandwich shop quietly eating his cheese sandwich, Gavrilo could not believe his luck: the large limousine carrying the royal couple stopped directly in front of him. Princip dropped his sandwich, took three steps forward, and fired just two shots, killing both Arch Duke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie. Had the sandwich shop been located two doors further down the street, Princip would have been too far from the car.

This is not to say that the proverbial powder keg of central Europe in 1914 would not have exploded from another spark a little later. But who knows, and who knows when? The Second Balkan Crisis of 1912-1913 had been resolved peaceably. Perhaps the tiny spark that started the catastrophe of the First World War was the location of the sandwich shop.



Another one of these situations was the Japanese Imperial Navy's arrogant and sloppy overuse of French Frigate Shoals—the Japanese Navy had used this small Pacific atoll to launch ineffectual and gratuitous raids on the Pearl Harbor naval base located on one of the two main American possessions in the Pacific. The Japanese used French Frigate Shoals to refuel flying boats by tanker submarine.

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The sole purpose of these useless raids was to puff up the reputation of desk-bound admirals in Tokyo, nothing more.

But the ever-astute Chester Nimitz had noted Japan's repeated use of French Frigate Shoals and had placed an American destroyer there as a deterrent—the Japanese having needlessly alerted the Americans to the critical strategic value of French Frigate Shoals with the useless raids.

When the French Frigate Shoals were truly needed for the critical refueling of the reconnaissance flying boats prior to the battle of Midway, there was an American destroyer sitting there. Had the destroyer not been there, and had the reconnaissance flying boats been refueled, they would have reported what Yamamoto most feared—that the American aircraft carriers were not in Pearl Harbor. As it happened, the Japanese went into the critical Midway battle blind, lacking this key piece of intelligence.

Andrew Blencowe

Tuesday, 4 February 2014

Prologue

ON THE 84TH STREET of Manhattan on this glorious Monday morning in September the sun into my study is streaming. On days like this I think how it was just a few years ago when Germany and America almost went to war. Fantastic though this seems now, I want to explain to the new generation of readers how this seemingly impossible situation could have almost occurred.

This afternoon I will be taking a short trip to the Empire State Building at 34th Street to meet the German Chancellor, my close friend, Alfred Jodl. Alfred is my only true friend in politics—on either side of the Atlantic. A friend in politics seems like a contradiction, as we politicians are all just sharks circling looking for the weakest to eliminate. Tomorrow we will be travelling by train to meet President Truman to discuss, among other topics, the situation in French Indochina.

As this is Alfred's first trip to New York (his previous two trips were just to Washington), I promised him we would visit the Chrysler Building, so he could see for himself the stainless steel terrace crown designed by Van Alen.

The steel was a special order by Walter Chrysler himself to the Krupp works—only the best German Krupp steel (the patented Enduro KA-2 austenitic stainless steel) was good enough for what many consider the ultimate icon of the Manhattan skyline. I know the details as I was the architectural consultant to Van Alen. Every time I look at the Chrysler Building, I think of Krupp.

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Alfred is arriving on the new zeppelin Paulus filled with the German invention of Hydrolium—a special unflammable mixture of hydrogen and helium—safe, but with 80% of the lifting power of hydrogen. It's fitting that the German Chancellor is travelling on an airship named in honor of the victor of Stalingrad and Persia, whose bold audacity captured the Suez Canal from the British, and who hastened the end of the terrible war with Britain. The Empire State Building's old zeppelin mast has been re-engineered to take the new German automatic mooring cables.

As most people know, Alfred took over from me as chancellor, after I served my term following the signing of the Armistice of '42. But this is all water under the bridge—now you can read for yourself how our two great countries came so close to the brink of a disastrous—and completely unnecessary—war.

Albert Speer, Manhattan
Monday, 13 September 1948

1: Meeting An Old Friend

Vevey
Saturday, 7 September 1940

THE SUN SLOWLY SET in the late summer day but the heat was still on the lake. Lake Léman—“Lake Geneva” as the moneyed classes liked to call it in Geneva—was its normal quiet self: modest, still and bland, just like the Swiss themselves. Julius Stein wandered about his apartment in his old purple and yellow dressing gown, the gold braid ends of the belt having been almost completely chewed off by the short-haired dachshund that respectfully followed his master. Julius slowly made his way to the small interior bedroom for his ultimate luxury—his afternoon nap.

The bed was really an elevated tatami mat holding a pale orange futon with a small Japanese buckwheat pillow at its head. The Asian bed blended into the room that was conventionally decorated by Julius’s very conventional German wife in what she boasted to the rich Iranians living in the apartment below was a “Japanese motif.” Sophie so loved to use the English word “motif,” a word she had recently discovered in one of Julius’s precious copies of the American *Esquire* magazine, which, for reasons never explained, Julius kept and very occasionally re-read; the February 1936 issue was always in his study, with a slip of paper to mark an article by an American writer.

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Julius laid down and thanked heaven for his tiny, small corner of peace and calm in the world. Every minute of every day back in Germany there was a tension in his chest and in his stomach, a sense of anticipation—actually more a dread—of the knock on the door, or even the tap on the shoulder as he rode the slow and squeaky elevated railway around Alexanderplatz—his and other Berliners’ beloved “Alex.” A dread of him and his family being taken away by the security service to disappear into the night and fog, to have their names recorded in the horrible and antiseptic SD books with only the terrible initials of “NN” beside their names. It had happened to his friends, it could have happened to him any day he was in Germany; this was the reality of the “New Germany.”

Julius knew the Swiss: they were dull, they were boring, and their lives centered around money and prestige, but they were fair in a world rapidly losing all sense of fairness. And he loved the sense of security he felt in Vevey.

Now, a glorious warmth slowly wrapped its soft feminine fingers around him, caressing him like a mother does to her child, nothing more important to her than to see the little smile and the tiny eyelids slowly drooping.

In the warmth and peace of the small bedroom, Julius could actually sense himself slowly falling asleep, a sensation he had never experienced in Germany. Soon he and the dog at his feet were asleep, both quietly snoring.



As the large, dark navy blue Mercedes descended into Vevey from the surrounding hills, the light rain ended and was replaced first by gloom and then, increasingly as they descended, by sunlight, at first feeble then increasingly bright and warm. The smell of chocolate announced the arrival at the home of the Swiss chocolate industry, with the cows in the surrounding verdant hills providing the milk.

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The car quietly moved to the parking reserve of the Trois Couronnes—the Three Crowns—a typical Swiss five-star hotel: discreet, spotlessly clean, self-effacing and, of course, extremely expensive. The fresh coarse gravel made little noise as the car came to a rest after its long journey. The motor, now at rest, sang out occasional metallic pings as it cooled after its long labors.

A tall and sparse figure left the comfort of the Mercedes—the custom-made rear seats were astonishingly restful—seats made by the custom maker Kurtsmann's who specialized in bespoke coach work for Mercedes' arch-enemy Auto Union, but in this case had been persuaded by the effortless guile of the balding young man.

Unobtrusively, the modest man made the five-minute walk from the hotel to the first group of apartments up the slight incline by the lake. He looked like any Swiss bourgeois—a small business owner perhaps—dull in dress and self-effacing in appearance and demeanor.

The small gate was painted a shiny piano black with three brass hinges, unevenly spaced, in the north Asian practice, where the two top hinges bore all the weight while the lowest hinge acted simply as a rudder. Closer inspection showed the gleaming paint to actually be baked enamel—"God is in the details," the visitor smiled.

Stopping for a moment, more out of habit than necessity, the man looked for the name—this was not his first visit. Pressing the button marked Stein, after a delay of a few minutes, the heavy wrought iron front door opened, and the familiar face of Professor Julius Stein peered out, still slightly befuddled from this nap.

Clarity returned and Stein exclaimed, "Albert! What a joy!"
"Professor."

"Please, please come in, and please no more 'Professor!' "
Albert entered.

Sophie, Julius's wife, coldly greeted Albert and then disappeared into the modern but quite small kitchen.

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After Albert left she complained, “They are all the same;” Julius gently reminded her of how both of them had avoided the camps or worse.

It was Albert who had persuaded the Swiss—initially against their will—to accept, perhaps “tolerate” was more accurate—the former head of the political economy school at the University of Berlin. Albert had pointed out to a number of Swiss departments, in particular the security people, the benefits of having Stein as a local consulting expert: his cosmopolitan world view; his expertise and knowledge of all things American; his encyclopedic knowledge of economic history.

And Albert had an ulterior motive. While it was true that he could have gotten safe passage for the professor and his wife to England or America, Albert wanted to retain access to Stein and his insights; so quiet, bucolic, boring, and nearby Switzerland was the perfect choice.

An example of Stein’s mind was the searchlights; it was Stein who had initially suggested the searchlights. As a canny and effective business man in his own right, Stein was thoughtful and surprisingly imaginative when it came to projecting the image of a company (or even a country) and this he discussed with Albert one bitterly cold evening in Berlin in ‘35.

“Albert, you should consider something truly spectacular for the next one of your so-called party rallies. While I obviously detest your Chancellor’s internal policies, I have to admit I begrudgingly admire his use of radio—it’s as effective as the American dictator Roosevelt’s. (Stein retained a deeply cynical streak when it came to all politicians, especially those who came across as caring; ‘they are the worst thugs of all,’ Stein had told Albert numerous times.) And these mass rallies are the modern-day *panem et circenses* that the ancient Romans did so well—sadly the average person wants to be told what to do and is happy to comply if his belly is full.”

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It was with this comment that the two men created the idea of the Cathedral of Light (or rather Stein explained and Albert listened). Against the rabid complaints of all, Albert had collected every searchlight in Germany—there were 130 working searchlights (eight others were still being constructed) —to be combined to create the Cathedral of Light lighting spectacular in the '37 Rally of Labor in Nuremburg. Albert got the credit, but both Albert and Stein knew it was Stein's Berlin idea on that bitterly cold winter's night that generated this breathtaking extravaganza (photographs of which got as far as the 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue and the Imperial Palace in Tokyo).

Stein led Albert to the living room with its glorious view of the lake.

“After such a long and arduous journey, I am sure you need some sustenance. Come, Albert. Eat.”

Point be made, Albert was hungry after the trip, but he was also concerned the food would simply make him sleepy.

So Albert asked for Italian coffee.

“Espresso, it is to be then.”

Turning to his wife, Stein quietly said,

“Sophie, why don't you let me and Albert catch up on old times? Does that make sense?”

“Does that make sense?” This was the phrase Albert had heard Professor Stein say a thousand times—“Does that make sense?”

This was precisely the reason for Albert's visit—does that make sense?

Stein lead Albert to a very small study—no desk, books alone three walls, a large dull brown overstuffed club chair with a small table to the left side—Albert recalled Stein was left-handed.

Albert settled on the small sofa, the only other furniture in the room.

Stein looked at Albert and smiled.

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“So I suppose you’re interested in knowing what Germany should do when Japan attacks America.”

Stein’s delivery was like a Vevey tram ticket collector’s “that will be one franc, please.”

Try as he might, Albert was unable to contain a gasp.

Stein laughed.

“Albert, dear Albert, you are still so easily shocked, and after all these years as a high functionary.”

Stein remembered one warm Sunday afternoon lakeside stroll they had made together, and how Albert was so shocked by the discovery of the detritus of Saturday night’s activities of courting couples’ lovemaking in the park that he ran all the way down to the lake.

Albert looked at Stein directly.

Stein shrugged.

“Albert—a blind man can see this. And here I am all alone, without my brilliant students, all alone in this beautiful apartment you created for me,” Stein raised his hand at Albert’s objection.

“Albert, you—you, Albert—you alone got us the two Swiss passports and the money and the papers—you, it is to you to whom Sophie and I owe our lives. Of course, I do not have words to thank you.”

Stein looked at Albert as he spoke, and Stein was at an age where he could be honest without being mawkish.

“So, Albert, how can I help you; how can I repay you, if ever so trivial?”

Albert leaned back and looked at this man—tall, still handsome, generous, and erudite. Sometimes Albert sat and wondered about the “master race” gibberish and asked himself, what was the Austrian’s game?

Albert sighed and said,

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“Professor, as always—as always—you’re more than a few steps ahead of me. Actually, I wanted to get this point in about two hours’ time, after I had my knights and bishops in place. But as you’ve squared my rook, as you so often do, I will be brief.”

Stein’s warm eyes did not move from Albert.

“You are correct. We do expect our fair-weather oriental allies to attack the Americans. We are not sure where or when, but it will be soon.”

Stein, matter-of-factly, said,

“When and how does not matter—the Japanese could attack San Francisco, or Seattle, again, this makes little sense, or San Diego—that does make a modicum of sense. Of course, instead of the United States, the Japanese may attack the American possessions of the Hawaii Islands or possibly the Philippines. When is also not critical. Personally, I expect it before May or June of ‘42, because that is when the Japanese will run out of oil. But it could be tomorrow, or it could be August in ‘42. My guess is sooner, rather than later, it will be before August 42 as August is the start of the typhoon season in north Asia.”

“Well, back to your question: when the Japanese attack the Americans, what does Germany do?”

Stein had been waiting for this question since he opened the front door.

“Nothing,” Stein replied.

“Nothing, Professor?”

“Albert, let’s be realistic. You know I spent ‘20 and ‘21 at Harvard, along with students from China, Japan, Britain and Austria.”

Stein had spent two years teaching at Harvard, and another six months seconded at River Rouge in Michigan working with a Senior Vice President, who reported directly to Henry Ford. Stein had hosted a number of trips for his Harvard students.

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“Please don’t take this the wrong way, but Europe is on a steeply declining parabola. We’re done for. The 14/18 war has sapped all our vitality—the Germans, the French, the English, the Italians, the Russians, all of us—kaput. When I was at The Rouge, as the Ford manufacturing plant is called—and it’s more a small nation-state than a factory—I realized Europe was doomed.”

Stein explained to Albert how coal and iron ore and rubber entered one end of this behemoth and cars spewed out the other end,

“‘Total Manufacturing Integration’ is what the Ford executives called it. And it makes Krupp look like a Lego factory.”

“Do I think Germany will be successful when the *Reich* attacks Russia? Possibly, and much as I hate the current claptrap that I read in the German newspapers, the Slavs *are* peasants, and they need to be defeated. Stalin is just the latest in a long line of tyrants.

Gorky was correct when he said about the Russians that ‘*All the dark instincts of the crowd irritated by the disintegration of life and by the lies and filth of politics will flare up, and fume, poisoning us with anger, hate, and revenge; people will kill one another, unable to suppress their own animal stupidity.*’ And the Russians have a history of five hundred years of pogroms and remember the Czarist Black Hundreds groups who hunted down and killed all the Yiddish-speaking people they could find.

Russia never changes—my friends at the Swiss security department have some extremely disturbing recent reports about what Stalin is doing in Russia—secret trials, mass executions, widespread starvation as a weapon; food rations have been cut to 1,000 calories per day; the minimum for an adult to survive is 1,400 calories. It is truly horrific and, remember, *pogrom*—the mass killing of Jews in Russia—is a Russian word that means *devastation*. And while I hate to say anything good about the regime you serve, it is actually the lesser of two evils. It was the American newspaper the

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New York Times that stated about the Soviets, ‘*For the first time in history, a nation has undertaken a general crusade against religion.*’ That was 10 years ago, but it is even more true today according to my Swiss friends.”

It was clear that Stein detested—and feared—the idea of a Soviet hegemony of Europe.

Stein continued,

“But America, that is a very different proposition—the Americans have an amusing phrase ‘a whole different ballgame.’ “

Albert’s confusion showed.

“Have you been to America, Albert?”

Albert had not.

Albert was becoming more and more concerned with what he was hearing, “So what can Germany do?”

Stein explained the two essentials, and Sophie joined them with the much-delayed espresso. The first critical step was to distance Germany as much as possible, and as quickly as possible, from Italy and from Japan.

“The Italians have wonderful coffee, and nothing else—*il Duce* is a clown, and a very stupid clown at that, albeit with some very colorful uniforms. I am sure you are aware of this from your friends in Berlin, and from fat Hermann’s transcripts.” (At this Albert looked very closely at his mentor).

“The Italians are totally unprepared for war, even a small war. Pomp and bluster aside, they’re children. Remember how Musso headed nine of the 22 Italian departments, including the merchant marine and how he forgot to tell his merchant ships to put to sea when the Italians finally declared war against a prostrate France and a weakened Britain—a quarter of all the Italian merchant marine tonnage was immediately interned by the British. Of course, the smiling Italian sailors were completely happy to be imprisoned in safe and civilized Britain on the Isle of Man.”

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“Think of it as swords: Germany is one of the Saracen’s finest swords, England is a rapier, but America is the largest of terrible broadswords.”

“And Italy?” Albert asked

“As a child did you ever play pirates with an eye patch and hat and rubber sword?”

“Well that is what the Italians are like—amusing and entertaining buffoons at best, very serious liabilities at worst.”

“The Japanese?”

The professor said nothing. He stood and went to the bookcase. He lifted a humidor elegantly decorated in mother of pearl. Silently, he opened it to Albert.

“Albert, Cuban Cohiba—your favorite.”

“Let’s go onto the terrace and I will tell you a story.”

The two moved to the terrace. It had a large retractable shade, which was partially extended so the terrace had all the warmth of the glorious late summer day, but no direct sunlight.

The Cuban cigars were less than four weeks old, their dark brown leaf was soft and fresh—no aged hardness, just moist, inviting, and tender. Albert wondered how, then remembered Julius did some very quiet consulting for the Swiss Federal Government in Bern.

With the nubile young cigars lit and smoking happily, the Professor continued.

“One of my students at Harvard when I was teaching there in ‘20 and ‘21 was a very bright and very funny chap everyone called Six Fingers. He was Japanese, actually descended from samurai. Spoke perfect English and went on to become a naval *attaché* in Washington after his time with us in Cambridge.”

“He was in the party of students I took on a tour of The Rouge when I was there. I will tell more of that trip by and by, but I got to know Isoroku extremely well, and we exchange letters to this day. In

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fact, I'll give you his Christmas gift to me as my Swiss doctor prohibits me from drinking spirits and I know you're a whiskey man."

According to Six Fingers, Japan is being controlled by much the same people you work with—boldly aggressive, highly nationalistic, but petite bourgeois in the worst possible way: fanatical about rank; always wanting to be nearest The Palace; all having the finest and youngest mistresses; taking slight at the smallest issue; and constantly stabbing each other in the back.

Albert looked at Stein, and said, "Sadly, that does strike very close to the quick, very close indeed. Replace 'The Palace' with 'Berg-hof' and actually it's an exact parallel. Only last week, Paul related to me that when they were recently touring northern France, there was a caravan of 18 huge Mercedes—you know the dual axle type you see in all the newsreels. According to Paul, they were all competing to be the second car. Of course, for many in the procession their stomachs got the better of them and they stopped for a three-hour lunch."

"Well, according to Six Fingers, the problem in Tokyo is that the Army and Navy are at loggerheads and the Navy has built this huge fleet."

Stein leaned forward for emphasis, "A huge fleet that is sucking the country dry of oil."

Stein explained how after the Washington Naval Agreement of 5/5/3, the Japanese were outraged when they were treated as the junior partner—Britain and America could lay down five times the amount of new tonnage to Japan's paltry three times. The Japanese contemptuously referred to it as 'Rolls Royce/Rolls Royce/Ford'. The Japanese had simply ignored the limitations—as had America—and had built, overbuilt actually, a navy fit for a celestial emperor, not just a mortal one. But this created a huge problem by consuming scarce and very expensive imported oil at an even faster rate.

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“They have built huge oil tanks, but with no oil to put in them, these tanks are useless. A blind man can see the Japanese with their so-called East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere need all the oil of Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. This is their only option—I doubt they can go through the Canal and sail up to Texas and the American Gulf states and ask for a few spare hundred million gallons, especially now that the Americans have unilaterally and illegally banned all Japanese ships from what they like to call ‘their’ canal.”

“It does not take much to read between the lines of the letters from Six Fingers to see this.”

“Yes, he is proud of the navy his country has built in less than twenty years, but he is a realist—they have this huge navy and no oil. At least we have the Romanian fields.”

Albert inwardly smiled at the Professor’s choice of pronouns.

“So?”

“So the Japanese are a far greater liability to Germany than the Italians, odd though that sounds.”

“So America is the enemy of the *Reich*?”

“Not at all—the Americans are no one’s enemy at present, but I think it likely they will become Japan’s enemy soon.”

“And the outcome?”

Stein ignored the question and asked,

“Albert, do you remember how the Russians fought before their surrender in 1917? To remind you, they had one rifle for every four soldiers, so one soldier would race toward our troops, be shot down dead, and then the second Russian soldier would jump up and snatch the dead man’s rifle—a baton race of the dead as it were. That, my dear Albert, is what you are facing when your Chancellor turns to the East, as he will sooner or later. The Slav peasants all fear everything, from the crowing of the cock at sunrise to the gentle dusk. But, in spite of all these fears—or perhaps it is because of all

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these fears—they all passionately love Mother Russia, regardless of whom the current autocrat is.”



Albert rose and thanked his host,

“With your permission, I should like to return tomorrow to discuss this further Professor.”

Stein scowled at Albert, “Only if you call me Julius.”

They both laughed.

Albert left his mentor’s apartment and walked back down the slight hill back to the Trois Couronnes. In the distance on the left he could see the simmering lights of Avian, famed for its baths and waters and at the other end of the lake the early evening lights around Geneva with its banks and casinos and whores.

Albert’s mind turned over the idea of Japan’s feet of clay and the possibility of America having the power of Hercules. Stein had no reason to dissimulate; there was no motive—or benefit—Stein could gain. Actually, the opposite—wise and prescient counsel could only help Stein.



Albert returned to the hotel. In the early evenings the hotel was the epitome of Swiss dullness. Albert was greeted by the concierge, a man Albert had hand-picked for the job four years early; Albert was nothing if not thorough.

“He’s in room 301,” the concierge whispered.

Albert nodded.

The lift was the old-fashioned type with the pair of wrought iron doors.

Closing the wrought iron doors himself Albert rotated the long brass control arm clockwise and took the lift to the third floor.

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Albert found 301 immediately—across the archway from the lift, it was the first door on the left.

As Albert reached the outer door of the suite, the door was opened by one of Berlin's leading actresses, a personal favorite of the Propaganda Minister—"Suzanne" or something like that, Albert vaguely remembered—Paul had mentioned her, actually gushed about her, but Albert had not been in the mood to listen.

"Suzanne" smiled at Albert and left along with another actress Albert recognized from the Berlin stage.



Albert entered and greeted his guest. Lord Nasherton was a tall man in his forties. His family had made its fortune in Scotland with patented inventions centering around bobbins and spools for automatic knitting machines. Over time, the Scots had moved south. Nasherton retained his Caledonian cautiousness regarding money and had handsomely improved the family fortune.

Albert asked after Lord Nasherton's two daughters.

"Yes, both bonny. Shiny coats and wet noses."

Albert remembered Nasherton's tedious habit of referring to his daughters in terms of a dog's health.

"And young Stephen looks like he will be going to Sandhurst this year. I understand there is something of a European war going on at present—hate to see Stephen miss the party."

Both men laughed.

Albert sat down and Nasherton poured Albert a very generous whiskey—a single-malt that Nasherton favored.

Small talk, idle gossip for a few minutes about Nasherton's subterfuge about travelling to Spain and then to Italy and finally to Switzerland.

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The single malt warmed Albert and he guessed Nasherton was already sufficiently relaxed after the actresses and now the Scotch for Albert's spiel. Nasherton's German was as good as Albert's.

So Albert got to the point immediately, which was: England was bankrupt after the Great War, same as Germany, not quite as apparent as Germany's penury, but real just the same; France was a whore, and a disheveled whore at that—a Montmartre strumpet, not a nice, fresh, young, polite "niece" who you could readily take to polite society; Russia—not Germany—was England's natural adversary—the Slavs had created a crazy patchwork quilt of Europe's races that make the place a constant powder keg; dealing with the Americans would surely spell the end of the British Empire.

Nasherton listened pensively; he had the gift of quiet. In some ways an odd man—just moments ago carousing with two of the *Reich's* finest ladies, and now he had smoothly shifted gears and was giving Albert his complete attention.

"I agree, but what on Earth can we possibly do?"

Albert explained that the thinking in Germany—meaning what Albert and some of the senior military types suspected—was that the biggest obstacle to an immediate cessation of all hostilities between Germany and England was Churchill. With Churchill gone, progress could be made; a peace could easily be brokered, the Empire saved, and Germany could get on with the business at hand, which was the annihilation of the hated *Bolsheviks*, and the final stabilization of Central Europe.

Nasherton stood and walked to the window. He looked out over the lake to the lights of Avian and then to the mountains in France—in spite of it being September, tiny swatches of last winter's snow were still visible on the highest peaks.

He turned to Albert.

"Of course, I completely agree. How could I not agree? Winston is rum, he's always been rum, always will be rum. Just look at

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the '15 disaster in the Dardanelles. Last year, God only knows why we didn't get Halifax. Churchill is as brave as a bulldog, but with about the same amount of brains. (Albert, have you ever noticed how Winston actually looks a lot like a bulldog? Of a certain bastard line, a miscegenate line. Have you ever noticed that?) And he deludes himself that he has the Yanks in his pocket—he's in for a rude awaking there; that is for certain. Actually, Albert, it just *may* be possible to get rid of Winston—just kick him up stairs somewhere—just as he himself did to poor old David Windsor. As for David, well his only problem—his only weakness—is that he loves to have *that* woman's mouth over his you-know-what. But nevertheless, how in God's name did the King of England fall for that Baltimore tart, a blind man could see she was a slut of the worst sort."

Albert smiled thinly, but only to be polite.

Albert had heard that the former king loved Wallis Simpson's attention, and—from a different source—that she was renowned throughout Europe as being without equal at being able to get the dead to rise to life again. It was said she had tricks with her mouth for her most prestigious lovers, tricks she had learned before her marriage to Mr. Simpson when she worked in some of the very finest brothels in Shanghai.

Nasherton went on, "And Winston is far too friendly with the frogs—damn French had done little or nothing for England, simply whine all the time. Look at this total rout three months back at Dunkirk—what a total cock up."

"But, be sure Albert; we'd have to play our cards very shrewdly—a little too early and one or both of us find ourselves swinging from the end of a rope—remember 'treason' is often defined as 'premature truth,' so timing is of the essence."

Albert agreed.

Nasherton returned to the PM,

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“It never ceases to amaze me that Winston has the gall to spout the nonsense he does. In reality, he is the opposite of what the press and the cinema newsreels portray. Truth be told, he is a bully and he becomes a violent and bitter bully when drunk, which essentially means any time after two in the afternoon. And his friends are so ill-chosen. Add to this that he is constantly in debt—he does not have a bean to his name.”

Nasherton then expounded on the wisdom of a coalition, possible with Halifax as the new PM. On and on the two men planned and plotted.



After an hour of extremely useful conversation, Nasherton suggested a detailed plan of campaign.

“Well that’s damn well done it—I think we two have done a fine job of reshaping the map of Europe here in quiet Vevey this evening.”

Albert fell silent but thought Nasherton was not overstating the case.

Nasherton said, “I always find that playing Bismarck makes me so extremely randy—no chance of calling back those two Berlin sweeties, is there Albert?”

Albert simply smiled, and lifted the telephone receiver. Nasherton couldn’t quite make out the instructions, but his curiosity was satisfied five minutes later when four exquisite Japanese young ladies quietly glided in. They were four of the most beautiful women he had ever seen. All in the Fall/Winter ‘41 Chanel. The four were all extremely quiet and moved as if any sound was an insult to their hosts. Only later did Nasherton learn that their classic geisha training forbade them from talking while they walked—they could only speak when stationary.

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It was clear from their carriage and demureness that they were very different from white women—all four affected a shyness (and perhaps they truly were shy?). They all looked like models from Paris, but with soft almond eyes and the most delicate soft skin Nasherton had ever seen—their skin seemed to have no pores. They varied in height tremendously—the tallest, in heels, was taller than Nasherton, who was a good six-foot, while the shortest, even in heels was only of modest height.

What both men noticed was the four girls were already excited. This was to be expected; whereas men are excited simply by visual physical beauty, women are far more sophisticated in this area—power, and the confidence to wield that power are what excite all women. In fact, the nipples on the short one with the very large 33EE bust were already boldly standing forth even through her Chanel jacket, not just minor bumps that could be occasionally glimpsed for a second in a perfect light by a timid, blinking schoolboy, but rather two hard pebbles proudly standing clear for everyone to see.

Nasherton was an old hand at this; he had handled—“entertained” was his euphemism—four girls simultaneously on a number of occasions; in Paris as well as in Capri. Paris had been disappointing, and Capri was as bad, for in both cases the white girls clearly had no interest and were simply watching the clock; if whores could only realize that the way to a men’s heart is through his trousers—an investment of just a few weeks of carefully concocted amorous attention could easily lead to a very expensive divorce in a year or two, but most working girls only wanted to leave they second they were paid.

Nasherton thought these Japanese girls looked different. Time would tell.

“Oh my, Albert, you have truly outdone yourself. I thought the two German starlets were outstanding, but I have never seen women such as these. How on earth did you get hold of them?”

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Before Albert could answer there was a polite knock on the door.

Albert opened the outer door of the suite. The Swiss waiter from the restaurant on the ground floor rolled in a table covered with a starched white linen tablecloth. On the table were four servings of the house's specialty—Vevey chocolate cake.

Also on the cart in an ice bucket was a bottle of Dom Pérignon 1921. Nasherton whistled, "Oh God, a '21; that's got to be one of the finest years ever."

Albert agreed.

Ever the connoisseur, Nasherton explained the importance of the 1921 vintage to the girls, who looked to him like they were dutiful school girls cramming for an important examination. Nasherton himself took a sip, and confirmed the glorious bouquet of the '21—the vanilla and sandalwood. But Nasherton did not linger, he—like Albert—realized the goal was to relax the young ladies to make them all the more excited, and all the more pliable.

"So ladies, enjoy this wonderful vintage and your cake, we have some men's talk to do. But please take your time to relax and enjoy the wonderful Swiss chocolate cake. Please, take your time."

Albert and Nasherton repaired to the other room in the suite.

"I say old boy, those girls are all absolutely first rate. You must explain how you came across them."

Albert explained,

"I've put Gabrielle Chanel up at The Ritz. She's getting her own suite in a few weeks, but she is currently in suite 254, and I've made sure she is completely happy—you know these fashion types are actually very simple to please, once you get past the initial pretensions and bombast. Her current suite is the one used by the American writer Fitzgerald, to write his book *The Great Gatsby*. I had the girls spend a few weeks with Gabrielle, for just a little more polishing: hair, shoes, and all those things that makes for a perfect lady,

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not really necessary with these Japanese girls, but could not hurt. One thing you will notice tonight is the exquisite softness of these girls' skin—and that no Japanese woman ever suffers from cellulite. I don't know the reason, perhaps it is the diet with all the fish. I don't know but compared even to the two starlets, these girls are head and shoulders above. And compared to white women, these girls' skin is amazing, as is the level of excitement.”

“The other thing you will notice is how all these Japanese women love men and more than anything love to pamper men. I've never seen the like—the mentality of Japanese women is so refreshing. Not only are they raw sexual animals under that facade of demure shyness, but they simply *know* so much more than white girls—these Japanese girls know of hidden pleasure points on a man's body that you don't even know you have. And they can excite a man far more intensely and for a far longer period of time; they are simply sublime. Their attitude is based on the greater pleasure they give to the man the greater their self-esteem—essentially the opposite of white women.”

Albert paused and looked into the middle distance and smiled one of his rare smiles as Nasherton listened intently.

After a decent interval, the two men returned to their guests.



The four girls all thanked the men for the wonderful cake and the delicious champagne.

The one with the very large chest had taken her jacket off. While doing so, both men noticed her nipples were now larger than ever, and she could see the two men saw this and this made her even more excited to show off her raw excitement to them. It was like a bullfight in extremely slow motion, the teasing and the toying and the languid passes of the cape.

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Nasherton meandered over to Albert who was by now standing at the window smoking a cigar.

“I want the little one first.”

Albert looked at him, “The one with the huge tits?”

Nasherton nodded.

“Yes. Yes, wise choice as she is the hottest of the four, but I suggest you have her last,” Albert said with an air of authority.

Nasherton wryly smiled, “So, you have vetted all, have you?”

Albert smiled and said, “James, do you expect me not to have ensured all are of the first water?”

At this Nasherton laughed, “You are one of a kind, Albert.”

“She loves it front or back and she loves two men at once. Get her on her back some time tonight and watch her tits move—they are like two eggs in a frying pan as the pan is shaken. When you’re on top, grasp her arms, as circus acrobats do, so you can pull her towards you. She loves that, and she is extremely loud. Their loudness is one thing that differentiates these girls from white girls.”

“Two eggs, yes, I know what you mean. Loud, that’s wonderful,” Nasherton acknowledged.

“By the by old boy, what are the girls’ names?”

Albert explained, “Masayo is this short one with the huge chest; Mikui is the tall one; Suki is the one with the blonde highlights; Yuki is the one with the extremely pretty face. But you can forget about their names, as you will shortly see.”

Nasherton frowned good-naturedly, “If you say so, old boy.”

The room was extremely large. By the windows was a small writing desk. Looking out on the lake were two pairs of tall but narrow glass doors that reached from the floor to the ceiling, closing both pairs of doors blocked all sound from the outside. The room was dominated by a huge bed—it was large enough to comfortably sleep eight, but it was designed to *hold*, rather than sleep, eight.

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Nasherton commented on the bed's size, "Christ Alive, Albert, that's a monster—we really need it all?"

Albert smiled and simply said, "Yes."



The four girls finished their cake and the bottle of champagne had been emptied. One of the girls had put the bottle upside down into the ice bucket as she had seen Albert do at the Ritz in Paris. Albert—ever the technocrat—said to Nasherton, "the chocolate excites them and they weigh half as much as a man so it's the same as if they had shared two bottles of champagne wine."

Nasherton piped in, "and of course, bubbly is absorbed very quickly, so these four are all chomping at the bit, if you forgive the metaphor. I think it's time to strike the colors."

Albert nodded.

Nasherton went over to the girls—"like the cake?"

"Oh yes, it was the best we've ever had, sir—even better than in Paris," said the tall one.

The "sir" made Nasherton more excited.

"Now why don't you girls take your shoes off and all sit on the bed together? Then I have a little game we can all play."

The four girls complied and before too long all four were giggling and sitting on the bed, all looking—and feeling—very relaxed and comfortable.

Nasherton turned off all the lights in the room apart from the small light on the writing desk by the window. Nasherton had opened the bottle of Bordeaux white wine the waiter had brought earlier with an ice bucket.

"People generally don't appreciate the white Bordeaux, this white wine is so often ignored—say 'Bordeaux' and everyone always thinks of the reds," he said as he poured himself and Albert each a glass.

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“Now, girls, the champagne has relaxed you and it is warm and safe here. What I want you to do Masayo and Suki is to remove the jackets and undo the blouses of the other two girls to entertain Albert and me, but very, very slowly please. You must go very, very slowly. We are not in a race this evening, you understand?”

This instantly led to four pairs of hands in front of four faces, and more giggling. It was, as all in the huge room knew, the protocol of graceful—but entirely artificial—innocence. It was play acting of a reluctance that was completely false—the four girls were each dying to feel a man inside them and deep inside them—“to hit the top of my roof” as one said later.

With a speed that made a lie of the giggles, the two girls started undressing the other two girls.

By now James and Albert were sitting on each side of the small side table, sipping the chilled white Bordeaux.

Nasherton confided to Albert, “This is the part I love most, the slow teasing. And this is where you really see the quality of the girl—all can get on their backs and do the completion, but few can properly *tease* a man. This is the start of the gold medal event, like in Berlin in ‘36 at your games.”

It was clear to Albert that Nasherton was both experienced and knowledgeable.

The two girls had removed first the jackets and then the creamy white blouses of the other two, but then there was a change to the plan: the other two then removed the blouses of Masayo and Suki, so all four girls were sitting on the bed in the brassieres and skirts—it was a very arousing sight.

From across the room, Nasherton said, “ladies, please take the shoulder straps of your brassieres down, very slowly please.”

This time there was no giggling as the soft light combined with the champagne had made the four young women even more excited. Now they wanted to exhibit themselves, to excite a man, to

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be ravished, to get the men to do what men are supposed to do to women. So Suki gently pulled her brassiere straps down and then, without being asked, she took her brassiere off. She had been sitting on the bed with her ankles crossed. When she removed her brassiere she uncrossed her ankles and put her right hand on the hem of her skirt, and she proceeded to pull her skirt up a little at first, and then more so the clips of her garter belt were showing. The very slow and elegant teasing was working; Nasherton smiled.

The other three girls did the same. Now the female carnal competitive instincts stirred—this was what the two men had been planning, and had been expecting; both men said nothing.

Far more than most men realize, women are sexually extremely competitive. This is especially true when two or more women are dishabille—they compete to entice the male to mount them first, and they will do just about anything to get the Tête de Cuvée of the man's seed. And this was the case of the extremely randy four Japanese beauties—each wanted to be the first to get the full load of seed inside them, they all wanted the full load, not a paltry second, or the dribble of a third.

In less than a minute all four girls were sitting upright on edge of the huge bed wearing only their garter belts, stockings, and skirts. And by now all four had hitched their skirts up. Masayo's skirt was all the way up to her garter belt and while her knees were getting further and further apart as she got more and more excited. She was clearly inviting the men to ravish her, and to do so now. And her nipples were like two very large peas—so round and hard.

All of this the two men took in and enjoyed, savoring their wine. The men's lack of action now teased the girls. "My pearl was aching so much, she wanted to feel a man inside her," Masayo later confided to Albert.

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Little in life could match this incandescent level of pleasure—the power the two men felt as they watched the four girls vie with each other for the men’s attention.

(And as both men knew from experience, it was going to get very loud, very soon.)

It had started with Masayo, but very soon all four girls had hitched their skirts up to their waists. As none was wearing panties, their dark shadows were clear to see, even in the modest soft light of the writing desk’s lamp.

Nasherton stood and walked over to the bed.

The first girl—it was Suki—looked up and brought her knees up, her hands were now on her knees and she opened her legs. Her breasts were round, sagging the slightest amount, and her breathing shortened; she was more than ready.

Nasherton then walked around the foot of the bed to the other side, to review Masayo who was in same position. Nasherton could not help but notice a small dark patch on the strict and starched white hotel sheets. James smiled—Masayo was so excited that some of her juices had already made a small wet spot—there were no panties to absorb the wetness. As Nasherton approached, Masayo slowly moved her hands from her knees, up her inner thigh to her garter belt. It was easy for her to use her fingers to open her lips. At the top of her lips Nasherton could see her large round pink pearl. James smiled—he had seen some large clits in his time, but this was by far the largest, and all of her lower lips were dashed with wetness. Nasherton decided she would be the last one “in the rotation”—by forcing her to be last she would be begging for it, just as Albert had recommended.

This mock inspection took minutes and the girls were getting more and more excited.

Albert, still seated, then said, “Girls, please show James our little surprise.”

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This time their level of excitement (and their desire to be serviced, and serviced as soon as possible) trumped any faux modest giggles.

The four girls stood up from the edge of the bed and removed their skirts, placing the skirts in a neat pile on the large chair in the corner of the room. All four girls wore identical white garter belts and white stockings.

The four girls stood naked apart from their garter belts and stockings. Nasherton noticed a curious thing: their feminine hairs had all been trimmed short, but even more curious was that they had been shaved in such a way that they each had roman numerals from “I” to “IIII.”

Nasherton laughed at this piece of theater, and said, “Albert, this reminds me of one of my trips to Hong Kong. I was at one of the better whore houses in Kowloon where all the girls wore just an enameled medallion with a number hanging around their necks on a brass chain. I seem to remember I had Number 5 and Number 17 that night. But your approach, Albert, is more in keeping with the spirit of the event.”

“Thank you ladies, please sit down on the bed together, please,” Nasherton requested.

The two men could see each of the four was slowly going mad with desire to feel a man inside her.

Nasherton smiled and said, *sotto voce*, “we are driving them crazy.”

Albert nodded. Nasherton poured more white wine, and said, “Leave the girls stew in their own juice, as it were, for a moment.”

(He knew that the forced delay would make all four lubricate even more.)

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The two men's attention now returned to the four girls who were now so excited that they were all giggling and panting. Nasherton noticed with approval that the presence of these two powerful men had affected the other three girls as well: the three other girls now all had tiny wet dots under them, although they all tried to hide their wet spot—Power As The Ultimate Aphrodisiac.

Albert asked how they liked meeting Coco.

At the mention of Gabrielle Chanel's name, the girls burst into a plethora of thanks.

The room was not cold, but now all the girls' nipples were taut and erect. The teasing phase was the one all men enjoy the most. And knowing that the sensation would be one of a very smooth entry into an extremely wet, but at the same time young and tight, Japanese gem.

And the girls were so excited, as they constantly crossed and uncrossed their legs, not out of modesty, but to be able to increase their excitement by squeezing themselves.

Albert sat at the writing table with the still chilled Bordeaux white, smoking. He was interested to see Nasherton's play acting with the girls. After a long while, Nasherton removed his suit jacket and sat on the bed evenly dividing the girls into two pairs. Masayo—the short one with the huge chest—was first to act, which was not surprising as she was already starting to pant, and the panting was not light—her breathlessness was not forced and the panting made her huge chest rise and fall ever so slightly. She was panting just from anticipation—neither man had actually touched her. Uncontrollable desire on her part made her recklessly—her hand on Nasherton's knee as a matter of formality. Then, instantly, she slid it all the way up and she was confidently stroking him. She wore her hair in an elegant Parisian page-boy bob; the color was a very

dark brown with the slightest hint of some blonde highlights, the overall effect was dazzling. The instant she started stroking Nasherton—and Nasherton was very hard—Masayo’s panting increased and she leant over and kissed Nasherton’s neck, brushing against him with her nipples.

During this foreplay and teasing, the other three girls were undressing Nasherton so his hands were free to first cup, and then squeeze Masayo’s huge breasts. Nasherton found them to be soft but surprisingly firm, and he himself was getting even harder. After Suki had wiggled off Nasherton’s trousers, after first having removed his shoes, Masayo got on her knees and put Nasherton into her mouth. At first, just the head, and then all the shaft—she loved that slight gagging when a big man’s head reached her throat. Naturally enough, Nasherton had some early milk, which she licked with the tip of her tongue—a little salty but not unpleasant, she thought.

All the time Masayo was on her knees she was moaning loudly, as the act of sucking was exciting her even more.



As Albert had explained to Nasherton earlier, all Japanese women think it an honor to be allowed to “dine.” And the ultimate delight was to be able to swallow all of a man’s milk.

“They’re very different in that respect to white women, aren’t they?”

Albert agreed, and went on, ever the analytical German,

“There are other major differences as well. For one thing, Japanese women all climax four or five times and you can often feel the early contractions and pulsations the moment you enter. More and more these days, white women cannot complete—they get close but then you have to stop and they are forced to resort to the crude and primitive act of using their own fingers. In contrast, these Japanese girls are essentially walking, slightly chilled, orgasms.”

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Nasherton smiled at Albert's use of the adjective—"Only slightly chilled, Albert?"

Ever serious, Albert continued his lecture,

"Oh yes. They have this extremely demure front and modesty because they are all firecrackers ready to explode. Diametrically opposed to white women, who are typically bluster on the outside but frigid on the inside. When I recruited these four beautiful young girls in Paris, I took them in pairs to dinner. They had not met me or each other beforehand. And both pairs thought it completely natural and normal to reward their host that night, and reward their host mightily. All four lack the white woman's posturing, the whining, and the thinking she was God's gift; no, none of that, just a sophisticated two hours of a half-dozen female climaxes by each girl. Then the expected nap."

Albert continued wistfully,

"Yes, I like the Ritz in Paris, as the beds are so large there. On the night I interviewed Masayo and Suki, after the nocturnal frivolities the two girls had a bath together, both chattering away like elegant little sparrows. Looking at them against the soft pinks and peaches of the marbled bathroom, well I can tell you that that alone was very exciting and had I not been previously completely drained..."

Albert smiled as he remembered those delightful times in Paris with these glorious Japanese women.



Masayo's mouth had worked almost too well, as Nasherton had to pull her off him. She was panting loudly and she got up and lay on her back on the bed; she took her fingers and again opened her lower lips. Normally, Nasherton felt this common female guile was a little too anatomical for his tastes, but the way this Japanese girl did it, it seemed perfectly natural. Immediately he pushed himself

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completely inside her, up to the hilt. Her almond-shaped soft eyes opened in shock, then surprise, then delight. Just as Albert had predicted, her contractions started pulsing immediately. She was panting loudly now and had her hands behind him and she was pulling him in, deeper and deeper. All the time, she was speaking Japanese in a high-pitched but soft voice saying, “*iku iku; iku iku; iku iku; iku iku; iku iku.*” Albert later explained the precise translation was the opposite of the European phrase—the Japanese girls say “I am going,” meaning “I am going out of control,” which in the case of Masayo was certainly true.

While Nasherton thrust inside, Masayo pushed herself up; her eyes opened wide and she was quiet for a second or two—she let out a deep guttural moan as Nasherton felt her grip him like no other woman ever had.

“It was not just the power, but also the duration—she was like that for ten seconds—her wide eyes stared at me and she seemed to be in a state of suspended animation. All this time the noise came from her. Then she relaxed. Before she relaxed I could not move in or out she gripped me so firmly. Amazing. Then there were a series of rapid but very light and soft contractions. Then it was over for her. She just lay where panting. I noticed all her body was covered with a sheen of perspiration; her back was dripping wet with perspiration.”



The effect on the other three girls watching Nasherton on top of Masayo was to make them all as excited as Masayo. All three got on their hands and knees on the bed, and Suki asked Nasherton, “please sample all of us and tell us which one you prefer.”

In contrast to Nasherton’s prior experiences with four girls in Paris and Capri, this was *crème de la crème*. In his life, Nasherton had never experienced such excitement as this evening, as these

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three girls unselfconsciously—and with complete naturalness—offered themselves to the Englishman to be ravished. And Nasherton observed one other thing: these girls were enjoying themselves more than he was. That truly shocked him, and it went a long way in explaining Albert's love of Japanese women on his visits to Paris.



After the excitement, Albert bid *adieu* to a very tired, but extraordinarily well satiated, Nasherton and quietly retired to his suite.

2: Jules Verne's Spaceship

Vevey

Sunday, 8 September 1940

THE NEXT MORNING, ALBERT had an early breakfast of croissants and real coffee in the spacious restaurant on the ground floor overlooking the lake. There were just a few small sail boats on the lake, all slowly crawling along the lake's edge like sleepy beetles. There was no sight of Nasherton and there was only one other table occupied—the four girls all flattering Albert with admiring glances. On his way out, he went over to their table and thanked them for all the “hard work” the previous night. Amidst the giggles, a flurry of hands to faces and downturned eyes resulted.

“Actually we were going to thank you and Mr. Nasherton for such an exciting evening,” Masayo said.

Astonishingly, her nipples were already visible at eight in the morning at the breakfast table.

Albert smiled to himself at the unlimited carnal energy of these young Japanese women—he was reminded of Nasherton's comments about the somnolent ways of plump English girls (Nasherton had actually been more explicit), and Albert was also reminded of the complete absence of cellulite.



After saying goodbye to the four young ladies, Albert leisurely strolled up the path to the professor's apartment. In the bright sunlight of the cloudless morning, the church bells called the faithful to worship.

Once at the front door, Albert knocked and the professor opened the door, this time bright and alert.

Conspiratorially, Stein confided that his wife had left to visit her friend in Geneva and, so—slipping into his American patois—Stein quietly proclaimed, “The coast is clear.”

Sitting on the terrace sipping coffee, Albert asked about America and the current state of its economy.

Stein said, “Wait here please.”

He left the terrace, returning a moment later with a magazine.

“Here is the most authoritative source we in the field of political economy have. It is a magazine that rather pompously likes to call itself a ‘newspaper’ so as to differentiate itself from the likes of Luce’s meretricious *Time* magazine and to associate itself with the quality broadsheets like *The Times* of London, and the *Financial Times*, and even the rather parochial *New York Times*.”

Stein opened the issue to the page he had marked with a slip of paper.

“The gist of this comment is that in 1930 the income of the average American was one-third greater than that of the average Britisher, but now at the end of the decade it is at par—the average American’s income is now the same as that of an Englishman. This is just 10 short years. And remember, apart from coal, Britain is devoid of natural resources, natural resources that the United States has in abundance. The magazine has recently commented that the United States seems to have forgotten how to grow. It also notes that in the five years from 1933 to 1938 Roosevelt has spent more money

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than the total money spent by all his 31 predecessors combined, and those presidents had to fund a terrible civil war as well as the Great War.”

“Really, more than the previous 31 presidents, combined? Are you sure, is that really possible?” Albert said, clearly very surprised.

“Yes, it’s rather amazing, isn’t it?”

Clearly warming to his subject, Stein continued, Socrates-like,

“Is there hunger in Germany, today? What about America?”

“Sadly, there is hunger in all countries. Sad, little children go to bed hungry in all the world’s countries. I would like to think that in Germany since ‘33, we have improved the lot of our people, at least I hope we have.”

“And I think you have improved the lot of the average person in Germany, at least as far as their belly goes. And I agree with you—sadly, there is hunger in all countries. So let me put you in a spaceship from Jules Verne with engines made of the finest Krupp steel, and take you to a planet where there is hunger but the state dictates that six million pigs be slaughtered and destroyed and wasted. Or that farmers are paid *not* to grow food, even while honorable young boys in Brooklyn hang themselves so as to not be a burden on their starving family. Or that a farmer who wants to put an acre under crop needs a government license or is fined \$1,000 a day. Or that chefs are told how they must make macaroni. Or that a housewife buying a chicken cannot select the bird, but must by law be given a chicken at random. So on this fantastical planet, housewives lose their primal right of selecting the food with which to feed their family. What would you say about that place?”

“Six million pigs wasted. Well, Professor, you’re right, it is science fiction—no such place could possibly exist.”

“Albert, I have described exact events that have happened in America in the past ten years.”

Stein smiled at Albert’s frown.

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“Bizarre though it sounds, since 1933, Germany’s economy has been freer than that of United States. Obviously I am speaking strictly about just the political economy, not about personal freedom, as Germany’s one-party dictatorship is just that—a dictatorship, and like all dictatorship it is a terribly brutal one: Kristallnacht; the endless hounding of Jews; the copying of the Britishers’ concentration camps of their South African wars of the last century—the list of brutalities is endless.

“But in purely political economic terms, there is less regulation and less harassment of German business men today than on the other side of the Atlantic. The wasting of the six million pigs was mandated by Roosevelt in an insane attempt to increase farm prices. Of course, that’s just another way of increasing hunger and starvation—the government told poor people to pay more to help farmers. And take the treatment of Henry Ford. When Ford refused to sign the so-called Blue Eagle code of Roosevelt’s NIRA and follow instructions that he must *increase* the prices of his cars, he was mercilessly persecuted. Ford was threatened by the brutal commissar, an impetuous bully named Hugh Johnson, a man Stalin would admire, both for his drinking and his explosive temper. About Ford, Roosevelt actually said at one of his press conferences that ‘*we have got to eliminate the purchase of Ford cars from all government tenders;*’ these are his own words, the words of the current American president. And when Ford bid on a contract for 500 trucks for one of Roosevelt’s alphabet soups—I think it was the CCC—his bid was \$169,000 less than the nearest rival and yet it was rejected.

“Now Roosevelt did not start the Depression, that dubious honor is reserved for his predecessor, President Hoover, whose nickname was the ‘Boy Wonder.’ Actually the Republican Hoover was much closer to Roosevelt’s ideas than most people realize: Hoover’s backward view was that ‘high wages creates prosperity.’ Obviously, the opposite is true. So before Roosevelt, after the crash

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of '29, Hoover forced companies to keep unsustainable and artificially high wages; these companies did what any rational business man would do, they simply laid off employees, which had precisely the opposite effect of what Hoover wanted. You see Albert, Hoover and Roosevelt both think that government is wiser than the market place. The Republican Hoover was the opposite of his predecessor, the Republican president Coolidge. Whereas Coolidge thought government interference caused more problems than it solved, Hoover loved to jump in, to 'do something'—to do anything at all, no matter how bad. But the problem is that the things that Hoover did were hugely damaging. In the last stock market panic in '21—before Hoover—companies laid off workers and business improved with the increased efficiencies, and then they hire back the workers, and more workers as well. One of the many things Hoover did that was so damaging in the '29 Panic was he forbade companies to fire people, so many companies just went broke and shut their doors. And Hoover forced the railroad companies to spend one billion dollars, and this was at a time when the entire U.S. government budget totaled just three billion dollars.”

At this juncture the two men were joined by Sebastian, Stein's faithful dachshund, who wandered onto the terrace and after approvingly sniffing Albert's shoes, proceeded to lie in the patch of sunlight.

“He will get too hot in a few minutes and then will move back inside.”

Sure enough, after two minutes Stein's prediction came true.

“Albert, you see, these days governments around the world believe that business men are more immoral than politicians, when in fact the opposite is actually true. A business man is only interested in one thing, namely profits, but politicians and their kowtowing minions in universities are only interested in power, hidden under the pretense of 'helping people.' Academics the world over

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all think they are greatly superior beings, blessed with superior intellects, conversing with superior colleagues, discussing superior topics, holidaying in superior locales, ineffectively lusting after pretty young waitresses. Fortunately, academicians are generally ignored. But politicians nowadays believe that only they can manage their country's political economy, and that the normal and natural cathartic effects of busting of periodic bubbles with panics are unnatural. Politicians and my fellow academics don't realize that they do more damage in the long term by trying to change human nature. And business men and especially investors are driven by the contradictory emotions of greed and fear. It would be nice to have the ideal of the 'rational man' but sadly people are not rational; they are primeval and crude and unpredictable; this will never change.

"Now, the Jules Verne space ship stories are all true stories from America. Both Hoover and Roosevelt believe in action and in gambling with taxpayers' money. Most important of all, they both believe in bigness, especially bigness in government. While the government of Hoover created the depression, the government of Roosevelt has made it the Great Depression. Hoover's government encouraged farmers to over-produce, which they were happy to do. Of course, the inevitable happened and farm prices collapsed—as there was more supply than demand. So the Hoover government put an infected and unclean bandage on another infected and unclean bandage and wasted 500 million U.S. dollars in the process trying to fix this disaster.

"And here is the most interesting point: in the same country, with the same workers, but with a different government in the decade of the 1920s, the country boomed. As you know this is a period that I have written about extensively and, of course, I observed the early years of the decade myself first hand when I taught at Harvard. In this period, President Coolidge was extremely conservative and believed that not interfering with the American

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economy was the best approach. Coolidge kept income tax rates low so that successful businessmen could plow back their profits into their businesses, which business men love to do as they generally treat their companies as their own little babies. And with these low taxes, Coolidge was rewarded with a robust economy. Of course, human greed took this too far, as it always does, and the American stock market became irrationally exuberant—the wild ‘animal spirits’ took over. For example, common people started to gamble on stocks and often did so using borrowed money called ‘margin’ and this was not investing for retirement but rather gambling.

“They were able to do this only because the Federal Reserve flooded the market in 1927 with cheap money. At one stage in 1928, the amount of this so-called ‘margin’ was equivalent to 18% of the entire American economy. Of course, with all this loose money, stock prices increased at an unnatural rate—from spring of ‘27 to summer of ‘29, the stock index, called the ‘Dow Jones’ doubled from 200 to 381. So when the selling started in late 1929, the second human emotion of fear took over, and the stock market collapsed faster than it had expanded in the prior two years. Now this extremely unpleasant—but essential—purging would have been relatively short-lived, but for the all-knowing politicians and the Federal Reserve, who continued to interfere. The only way to tame animal spirits is by people losing money, not by government rules to ‘regulate’ the markets—until the last trumpet sounds, people will always be driven by greed and fear.

“Albert, if you see people are oversized children, as I do, rather than as rational beings, then it is clear that these children need to be chastised rather than pampered. And farmers are a perfect example. In all countries, farmers are the greatest whiners—they complain about everything. The best solution is not to cave into their complaints, but rather to ignore them. Let the weaker farmers give up

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or sell out, this is called the marketplace, and the marketplace is just a formalization of human nature.”

“The marketplace is simply an abstraction of humanity, of human behavior, of greed and of fear, of the very nature of people with their strengths and weaknesses. While politicians and their toadies in academia are convinced they can rise above this baseness, they are wrong. Politicians like to boast on the radio that they can quote ‘make the world a better place;’ actually, it is business that makes the world a better place, but the process is an ugly one, and people’s loathing of this ugliness is what politicians prey on. Politicians all promise to ‘control,’ to ‘regulate,’ to ‘improve.’ Their fanciful schemes often do generate a short-term euphoria, but this drug quickly wears off, and like the person running down stairs, more and more is needed—it is simply an addiction. And as the addiction rapidly grows, it needs to be fed more and more.”

About the Author

Originally from Melbourne, Australia, Andrew Blencowe discovered at an early age what it was like to live on the edge of life. During his high school years he dropped out to become a motorcycle racer. Smitten by computers in his early twenties, he went on to become founder and CEO of an international software company with offices on five continents. It is his international perspective and a drive to challenge assumptions that influence his writing interests.

Learn more at AndrewBlencowe.com including details about Blencowe's forthcoming *The Last Bastion of Civilization: Japan 2041* scheduled for Fall 2015.

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