

Prologue

Autumn 1945

Altaussee, Austria

She was not used to being hunted.

The lake stretched slate blue, glittering. The woman gazed over it, hands lying loose in her lap. A folded newspaper sat beside her on the bench. The headlines all trumpeted arrests, deaths, forthcoming trials. The trials would be held in Nuremberg, it seemed. She had never been to Nuremberg, but she knew the men who would be tried there. Some she knew by name only, others had touched champagne flutes to hers in friendship. They were all doomed. Crimes against peace. Crimes against humanity. War crimes.

By what law? she wanted to scream, beating her fists against the injustice of it. *By what right?* But the war was over, and the victors had won the right to decide what was a crime and what was not. What was humanity, and what was not.

It was humanity, she thought, what I did. It was mercy. But the victors would never accept that. They would pass judgment at Nuremberg and forever after, decreeing what acts committed in a lawful past would put a man's head in a noose.

Or a woman's.

She touched her own throat.

Run, she thought. If they find you, if they realize what you've done, they will lay a rope around your neck.

But where was there to go in this world that had taken everything she loved? This world of hunting wolves. She used to be the hunter, and now she was the prey.

So hide, she thought. Hide in the shadows until they pass you by.

She rose, walking aimlessly along the lake. It reminded her painfully of Lake Rusalka, her haven in Poland, now ruined and lost to her. She made herself keep moving, putting one foot after the other. She did not know where she was going, only that she refused to huddle here paralyzed by fear until she was scooped onto the scales of their false justice. Step by step the resolve hardened inside her.

Run.

Hide.

Or die.

THE HUNTRESS

BY IAN GRAHAM

APRIL 1946

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SIX SHOTS.
She fired six times on the shore of Lake Rusalka, not attempting to hide what she did. Why would she? Hitler's dream of empire had yet to crumble and send her fleeing for the shadows. That night under a Polish moon, she could do whatever she wanted—and she murdered six souls in cold blood.

Six shots, six bullets, six bodies falling into the dark water of the lake.

They had been hiding by the water, shivering, eyes huge with fear—escapes from one of the eastbound trains, perhaps, or survivors fleeing one of the region's periodic purges. The dark-haired woman found them, comforted them, told them they were safe. She took them into her house

by the lake and fed them a meal, smiling.

Then she led them back outside—and killed them.

Perhaps she lingered there, admiring the moon on the water, smelling gun smoke.

That nighttime slaughter of six at the height of the war was only one of her crimes. There were others. The hunting of Polish laborers through dense woods as a party game. The murder, near the war's end, of a young English prisoner of war escaped from his stalag. Who knows what other crimes lie on her conscience?

They called her *die Jägerin*—the Huntress. She was the young mistress of an SS officer in German-occupied Poland, the hostess of grand parties on the lake, a keen shot. Perhaps she was the rusalka the lake was named for—a lethal, malevolent water spirit.

I think of her as I sit

KATE QUINN

among the ranks of journalists in the Palace of Justice in Nuremberg, watching the war crimes trials grind on. The wheel of justice turns; the gray-faced men in the defendants' box will fall beneath it. But what about the smaller fish, who escape into the shadows as we aim our brilliant lights on this courtroom? What about the Huntress? She vanished at

the war's end. She was not worth pursuing—a woman with the blood of only a dozen or so on her hands, when there were the murderers of millions to be found. There were many like her—small fish, not worth catching.

Where will they go?

Where did *she* go?

And will anyone take up the hunt?

PART I

Chapter 1

JORDAN

April 1946

Selkie Lake, three hours west of Boston

Who is she, Dad?”
Jordan McBride had timed the question perfectly: her father jerked in surprise midcast, sending his fishing line flying not into the lake, but into the branch of the overhanging maple. Jordan’s camera went *click* as his face settled into comic dismay. She laughed as her father said three or four words he then told her to forget.

“Yes, sir.” She’d heard all his curse words before, of course. You did, when you were the only daughter of a widowed father who took you fishing on fine spring weekends instead of the son he didn’t have. Jordan’s father rose from the end of the little dock and tugged his fishing line free. Jordan raised the Leica for another shot of his dark silhouette, framed against the feathery movement of trees and water. She’d play with the image in the darkroom later, see if she could get a blurred effect on the leaves so they seemed like they were still *moving* in the photograph . . .

“Come on, Dad,” she prompted. “Let’s hear about the mystery woman.”

He adjusted his faded Red Sox cap. “What mystery woman?”

“The one your clerk tells me you’ve been taking out to dinner, those nights you said you were working late.” Jordan held her breath, hoping. She couldn’t remember the last time her father had been on a date. Ladies were always fluttering their gloved fingers at him after Mass on the rare occasions he and Jordan went to church, but to Jordan’s disappointment he never seemed interested.

“It’s nothing, really . . .” He hemmed and hawed, but Jordan wasn’t fooled for a minute. She and her father looked alike; she’d taken enough photographs to see the resemblance: straight noses, level brows, dark blond hair cut close under her father’s cap and spilling out under Jordan’s in a careless ponytail. They were even the same height now that she was nearly eighteen; medium for him and tall for a girl—but far beyond physical resemblance, Jordan *knew* her father. It had just been the two of them since she was seven years old and her mother died, and she knew when Dan McBride was working up to tell her something important.

“Dad,” she broke in sternly. “*Spill.*”

“She’s a widow,” her father said at last. To Jordan’s delight, he was blushing. “Mrs. Weber first came to the shop three months ago.” During the week her father stood three-piece-suited and knowledgeable behind the counter of McBride’s Antiques off Newbury Street. “She’d just come to Boston, selling her jewelry to get by. A few gold chains and locket, nothing unusual, but she had a string of gray pearls, a beautiful piece. She held herself together until then, but she started crying when it came time to part with the pearls.”

“Let me guess. You gave them back, very gallantly, then padded your price on her other pieces so she still walked out with the same amount.”

He reeled in his fishing line. “She also walked out with an invitation for dinner.”

“Look at you, Errol Flynn! Go on—”

“She’s Austrian, but studied English at school so she speaks it almost perfectly. Her husband died in ’43, fighting—”

“Which side?”

“That kind of thing shouldn’t matter anymore, Jordan. The war’s

over.” He fixed a new lure. “She got papers to come to Boston, but times have been hard. She has a little girl—”

“She *does*?”

“Ruth. Four years old, hardly says a word. Sweet little thing.” Giving a tweak of Jordan’s cap. “You’ll love her.”

“So it’s already serious, then,” Jordan said, startled. Her father wouldn’t have met this woman’s child if he wasn’t serious. But *how* serious . . . ?

“Mrs. Weber’s a fine woman.” He cast his line out. “I want her to come to supper at the house next week, her and Ruth. All four of us.”

He gave her a wary look, as if waiting for her to bristle. And part of her did just a tiny bit, Jordan admitted. Ten years of having it be just her and her dad, being *pals* with him the way so few of her girlfriends were with their fathers . . . But against that reflexive twinge of possessiveness was relief. He needed a woman in his life; Jordan had known that for years. Someone to talk to; someone to scold him into eating his spinach. Someone else to lean on.

If he has someone else in his life, maybe he won’t be so stubborn about not letting you go to college, the thought whispered, but Jordan shoved it back. This was the moment to be happy for her father, not hoping things might change for her own benefit. Besides, she *was* happy for him. She’d been taking photographs of him for years, and no matter how wide he smiled at the lens, the lines of his face when they came up ghostlike out of the developing fluid said *lonely, lonely, lonely*.

“I can’t wait to meet her,” Jordan said sincerely.

“She’ll bring Ruth next Wednesday, six o’clock.” He looked innocent. “Invite Garrett, if you want. He’s family too, or he could be—”

“Subtle as a train wreck, Dad.”

“He’s a fine boy. And his parents adore you.”

“He’s looking ahead toward college now. He might not have much time for high school girlfriends. Though you could send me to BU with him,” Jordan began. “Their photography courses—”

“Nice try, missy.” Her father looked out over the lake. “The fish aren’t biting.” And neither was he.

Taro, Jordan's black Labrador, raised her muzzle from where she'd been sunning on the dock as Jordan and her dad walked back to shore. Jordan snapped a shot of their side-by-side silhouettes thrown across the water-warped wood, wondering what *four* silhouettes would look like. *Please*, Jordan prayed, thinking of the unknown Mrs. Weber, *please let me like you*.

A SLIM HAND extended as blue eyes smiled. "How lovely to meet you at last."

Jordan shook hands with the woman her father had just ushered into the sitting room. Anneliese Weber was small and slender, dark hair swept into a glossy knot at her nape, a string of gray pearls her only jewelry. A dark floral dress, darned but spotless gloves, quiet elegance with touches of wear and tear. Her face was young—she was twenty-eight, according to Jordan's dad—but her eyes looked older. Of course they did; she was a war widow with a young child, starting over in a new country.

"Very pleased to meet you," Jordan said sincerely. "This must be Ruth!" The child at Anneliese Weber's side was darling; blond pigtails and a blue coat and a grave expression. Jordan extended a hand, but Ruth shrank back.

"She's shy," Anneliese apologized. Her voice was clear and low, almost no trace of a German accent. Just a little softness on the V's. "Ruth's world has been very unsettled."

"I didn't like strangers at your age either," Jordan told Ruth. Not true, really, but something about Ruth's wary little face made Jordan long to put her at ease. She also longed to take Ruth's picture—those round cheeks and blond braids would just eat up the lens. Jordan's father took the coats, and Jordan dashed into the kitchen to check the meatloaf. By the time she came out, whipping off the towel she'd tucked around her waist to protect her green Sunday taffeta, her father had poured drinks. Ruth sat on the couch with a glass of milk, as Anneliese Weber sipped sherry and surveyed the room. "A lovely home. You're young to keep house for your father, Jordan, but you do it very well."

Nice of her to lie, Jordan approved. The McBride house always looked mussed: a narrow brownstone three stories up and down on the lace-curtain side of South Boston; the stairs steep, the couches worn and comfortable, the rugs always skidding askew. Anneliese Weber did not seem like the type who approved of anything being askew, with her spine ramrod straight and every hair in place, but she looked around the room with approval. “Did you take this?” She gestured to a photograph of the Boston Common, mist wrapped and tilted at an angle that made everything look otherworldly, a dream landscape. “Your father tells me you are quite a . . . What is the word? A snapper?”

“Yes.” Jordan grinned. “Can I take your picture later?”

“Don’t encourage her.” Jordan’s dad guided Anneliese to the couch with a reverent touch to the small of her back, smiling. “Jordan already spends too much time staring through a lens.”

“Better than staring at a mirror or at a film screen,” Anneliese replied unexpectedly. “Young girls should have more on their minds than lipstick and giggling, or they will grow from silly girls to sillier women. You take classes for it—picture-taking?”

“Wherever I can.” Since Jordan was fourteen she’d been signing up for whatever photography classes she could pay for out of her allowance, and sneaking into college courses wherever she could find a professor willing to wink at the presence of a knock-kneed junior high schooler lurking in the back row. “I take classes, I study on my own, I practice—”

“One has to be serious about something in order to be good at it,” Anneliese said, approving. A warm glow started in Jordan’s chest. *Serious. Good.* Her father never saw Jordan’s photography that way. “Messing about with a camera,” he’d say, shaking his head. “Well, you’ll grow out of it.” *I’m not going to grow out of it*, Jordan had replied at fifteen. *I’m going to be the next Margaret Bourke-White.*

Margaret who? he’d responded, laughing. He laughed nicely, indulgently—but he’d still laughed.

Anneliese didn’t laugh. She looked at Jordan’s photograph and

nodded approval. For the first time Jordan allowed herself to think the word: *Stepmother* . . . ?

At the dining room table Jordan had set with the Sunday china, Anneliese asked questions about the antiques shop as Jordan's father heaped her plate with the choicest cuts of everything. "I know an excellent treatment to make colored glass shine," she said as he talked about a set of Tiffany lamps acquired at an estate sale. She quietly corrected Ruth's grip on her fork as she listened to Jordan talk about her school's forthcoming dance. "Surely you have a date, a pretty girl like you."

"Garrett Byrne," Jordan's father said, forestalling her. "A nice young man, joined up to be a pilot at the end of the war. He never saw combat, though. Got a medical discharge when he broke his leg during training. You'll meet him Sunday, if you'd care to accompany us to Mass."

"I would like that. I've been trying so hard to make friends in Boston. You go every week?"

"Of course."

Jordan coughed into her napkin. She and her father hardly went to Mass more than twice a year, Easter and Christmas, but now he sat there at the head of the table positively radiating piety. Anneliese smiled, also radiating piety, and Jordan mused about courting couples on their best behavior. She saw it every day in the halls at school, and apparently the older generation was no different. Maybe there was a photo-essay in that: a series of comparison photographs, courting couples of all ages, highlighting the similarities that transcended age. With the right titles and captions, it might make a piece strong enough to submit to a magazine or newspaper . . .

Plates were cleared, coffee brought out. Jordan cut the Boston cream pie Anneliese had brought. "Though I don't know why you call it pie," she said, blue eyes sparkling. "It's cake, and don't tell an Austrian any differently. We know cake, in Austria."

"You speak such good English," Jordan ventured. She couldn't tell yet about Ruth, who hadn't spoken a word.

“I studied it at school. And my husband spoke it for business, so I practiced with him.”

Jordan wanted to ask how Anneliese had lost her husband, but her father shot her a warning glance. He’d already given clear instructions: “You’re not to ask Mrs. Weber about the war, or her husband. She’s made it quite clear it was a painful time.”

“But don’t we want to know everything about her?” Much as Jordan wanted her father to have someone special in his life, it still had to be the *right* someone. “Why is that wrong?”

“Because people aren’t obliged to drag out their old hurts or dirty laundry just because of your need to know,” he answered. “No one wants to talk about a war after they’ve lived through it, Jordan McBride. So don’t go prying where you’ll be hurting feelings, and no wild stories either.”

Jordan had flushed then. *Wild stories*—that was a bad habit going back ten years. When her barely remembered mother had gone into the hospital, seven-year-old Jordan had been packed off to stay with some well-meaning dimwit of an aunt who told her, *Your mother’s gone away*, and then wouldn’t say where. So Jordan made up a different story every day: *She’s gone to get milk. She’s gone to get her hair done*. Then when her mother still didn’t come back, more fanciful stories: *She’s gone to a ball like Cinderella. She’s gone to California to be a movie star*. Until her father came home weeping to say, *Your mother’s gone to the angels*, and Jordan didn’t understand why his story got to be the real one, so she kept making up her own. “Jordan and her wild stories,” her teacher had joked. “Why *does* she do it?”

Jordan could have said, *Because no one told me the truth. Because no one told me “She’s sick and you can’t see her because you might catch it” so I made up something better to fill the gap*.

Maybe that was why she’d latched so eagerly onto her first Kodak at age nine. There weren’t *gaps* in photographs; there wasn’t any need to fill them up with stories. If she had a camera, she didn’t need to tell stories; she could tell the truth.

Taro lolloped into the dining room, breaking Jordan's thoughts. For the first time, she saw little Ruth grow animated. "*Hund!*"

"English, Ruth," her mother said, but Ruth was already on the floor holding out shy hands.

"*Hund,*" she whispered, stroking Taro's ears. Jordan's heart melted completely. "I'm getting a picture," she said, slipping out of her own chair and going for the Leica on the hall table. When she came back in and started clicking, Ruth had Taro piled over her lap as Anneliese spoke softly. "If Ruth seems very quiet to you, or flinches, or acts odd—well, you should know that in Altaussee before we left Austria, we had a very upsetting encounter by the lake. A refugee woman who tried to rob us . . . It's made Ruth wary and strange around new people." That seemed to be all Anneliese was going to say. Jordan tamped down her questions before her dad could shoot her another glance. He was perfectly correct, after all, when he pointed out that Anneliese Weber wasn't the only person who didn't care to discuss the war—no one did now. First everyone had celebrated, and now all anyone wanted to do was forget. Jordan found it hard to believe that at this time last year there had still been wartime news and stars hanging in windows; Victory gardens and listening to the boys at school talk about whether it would all be over before they got old enough to join up.

Anneliese smiled down at her daughter. "The dog likes you, Ruth."

"Her name is Taro," said Jordan, clicking away: the little girl with her small freckled nose against the dog's damp one.

"Taro." Anneliese tasted the word. "What kind of name is that?"

"After Gerda Taro—the first female photographer to cover the front lines of a war."

"And she died doing it, so that's enough about women taking pictures in war zones," Jordan's father said.

"Let me get a few shots of you two—"

"Please don't." Anneliese turned her face away with a camera-shy frown. "I hate having my picture taken."

"Just family snaps," Jordan reassured. She liked close-camera candids over formal shots. Tripods and lighting equipment made

camera-shy people even more self-conscious; they put a mask on and then the photograph wasn't *real*. She preferred to hover unobtrusively until people forgot she was there, until they forgot the mask and relaxed into who they really were. There was no hiding the real you from a camera.

Anneliese rose to clear the table, Jordan's father assisting with the heavy dishes as Jordan quietly moved and snapped. Ruth was coaxed away from Taro to carry the butter dish, and Dad was soon describing their hunting cabin. "It's a lovely spot; my father built it. Jordan likes to snap the lake; I go for the fishing and the odd bit of shooting."

Anneliese half turned away from the sink. "You hunt?"

Jordan's father looked anxious. "Some women hate the noise and the mess—"

"Not at all . . ."

Jordan put down her camera and went to help with the washing up. Anneliese offered to dry, but Jordan turned her down so she'd have the chance to admire Daniel McBride's deftness with a dish towel. No woman could possibly fail to be charmed by a man who could properly dry Spode.

Anneliese said good-bye soon after. Jordan's father gave her a chaste kiss on the cheek, but his arm stole around her waist for just an instant, making Jordan smile. Anneliese then squeezed Jordan's hand warmly, and Ruth offered her fingers this time, well slimed by Taro's affectionate tongue. They descended the steep brownstone steps to the cool spring night, and Jordan's father shut the door. Before he could ask, Jordan came and kissed his cheek. "I like her, Dad. I really do."

BUT SHE COULDN'T sleep.

The tall narrow brownstone had a small basement with its own private entrance to the street. Jordan had to walk outside the house and then down the very steep outer stairs to the tiny door set below ground level under the stoop, but the privacy and the lack of light made it perfect for her purposes. When she was fourteen and

learning to print her own negatives, her dad had allowed her to sweep out the rubbish and make herself a proper darkroom.

Jordan paused on the threshold, inhaling the familiar scents of chemicals and equipment. This was *her* room, much more than the cozy bedroom upstairs with its narrow bed and the desk for homework. This room was where she ceased being Jordan McBride with her messy ponytail and bag of schoolbooks, and became J. Bryde, professional photographer. J. Bryde was going to be her byline someday, when she became a professional like her idols whose faces looked down from the darkroom wall: Margaret Bourke-White kneeling with her camera on a massive decorative eagle's head sixty-one floors up on the Chrysler Building, impervious to the height; Gerda Taro crouched behind a Spanish soldier against a heap of rubble, peering for the best angle.

Normally Jordan would have taken a moment to salute her heroines, but something was gnawing at her. She wasn't sure what, so she just started laying out trays and chemicals with the speed of long practice.

She loaded the negatives for the pictures she'd taken at dinner, running the images onto the paper one at a time. Sliding them through the developer under the red glow of the safelight, Jordan watched the images come up through the fluid one by one, like ghosts. Ruth playing with the dog; Anneliese Weber turning away from the camera; Anneliese from behind, doing dishes . . . Jordan rotated the sheets through the stop bath, the fixer bath, gently agitating the liquids in their trays, transferring the prints to the little sink for washing, then clipping them up on the clothesline to dry. She walked down the line one by one.

"What are you looking for?" Jordan wondered aloud. She had a habit of talking to herself down here all alone; she wished she had a fellow photographer to share darkroom conversation with, ideally some smoldering Hungarian war correspondent. She walked the line of prints again. "What caught your eye, J. Bryde?" It wasn't the first time she'd had this niggling feeling about a shot before it had even been printed. It was like the camera saw something she

didn't, nagging her until she saw it with her own eyes and not just through the lens.

Half the time, of course, that feeling was completely off base.

"That one," Jordan heard herself saying. The one of Anneliese Weber by the sink, half turned toward the lens. Jordan squinted, but the image was too small. She ran it again, enlarging it. Midnight. She didn't care, working away until the enlarged print hung on the line.

Jordan stood back, hands on hips, staring at it. "Objectively," she said aloud, "that is one of the best shots you've ever taken." The *click* of the Leica had captured Anneliese as she stood framed by the arch of the kitchen window, half turned toward the camera for once rather than away from it, the contrast between her dark hair and pale face beautifully rendered. But . . .

"Subjectively," Jordan continued, "that shot is goddamn spooky." She didn't often swear—her father didn't tolerate bad language—but if there was ever an occasion for a *goddamn*, this was it.

It was the expression on the Austrian woman's face. Jordan had sat across from that face all evening, and she'd seen nothing but pleasant interest and calm dignity, but in the photograph a different woman emerged. She wore a smile, but not a pleasant one. The eyes were narrowed, and her hands around the dish towel suddenly clenched in some reflexive death grip. All evening Anneliese had looked gentle and frail and ladylike, but she didn't look like that here. Here, she looked lovely and unsettling and—

"Cruel." The word popped out of Jordan's mouth before she knew she was thinking it, and she shook her head. Because *anyone* could take an unflattering photo: unlucky timing or lighting caught you midblink and you looked sly, caught you with your mouth open and you looked half-witted. Shoot Hedy Lamarr the wrong way, and she turned from Snow White to the Wicked Queen. Cameras didn't lie, but they could certainly mislead.

Jordan reached for the clothespins clipping the print, meeting that razor-edged gaze. "What were you saying, right at this minute?" Her father had been talking about the cabin . . .

You hunt?

Some women hate the noise and the mess—

Not at all . . .

Jordan shook her head again, moving to throw the print away. Her dad wouldn't like it; he'd think she was twisting the image to see something that wasn't there. *Jordan and her wild stories.*

But I didn't twist it, Jordan thought. *That's how she looked.*

She hesitated, then slipped the photograph into a drawer. Even if it was misleading, it was still one of the best pictures she'd ever taken. She couldn't quite bring herself to throw it away.

Chapter 2

IAN

April 1950

Cologne, Germany

About half the time, they tried to run.

For a moment Ian Graham's partner kept up with him, but though Tony was more than a decade younger than Ian he was half a head shorter, and Ian's longer stride pulled him ahead toward their quarry: a middle-aged man in a gray suit dodging desperately around a German family heading away from the swimming beach with wet towels. Ian put on a burst of speed, feeling his hat blow away, not bothering to shout at the man to stop. They never stopped. They'd sprint to the end of the earth to get away from the things they'd done.

The puzzled German family had halted, staring. The mother had an armful of beach toys—a shovel, a red bucket brimming with wet sand. Veering, Ian snatched the bucket out of her hand with a shouted “Pardon me—,” slowed enough to aim, and slung it straight and hard at the running man's feet. The man stumbled, staggered, lurched back into motion, and by then Tony blew past Ian and took the man down in a flying tackle. Ian skidded to a halt as the two men rolled over, feeling his own chest heave like a bellows. He retrieved the bucket and handed it back to the astonished German mother

with a bow and a half smile. "Your servant, ma'am." Turning back toward the prey, he saw the man curled on the path whimpering as Tony leaned over him.

"You'd better not have put a fist on him," Ian warned his partner.

"The weight of his sins caught up to him, not my fist." Tony Rodomovsky straightened: twenty-six years old with the olive-skinned, dark-eyed intensity of a European, and the untidy swagger of a Yank. Ian had first come across him after the war, a young sergeant with Polish-Hungarian blood and a Queens upbringing wearing the most carelessly ironed uniform Ian had ever had the misfortune to lay eyes on.

"Nice curveball with that bucket," Tony went on cheerfully. "Don't tell me you pitched for the Yankees."

"Bowled against Eton in the house match in '29." Ian retrieved his battered fedora, cramming it down over dark hair that had been salted with gray since Omaha Beach. "You have it from here?"

Tony looked at the man on the ground. "What do you say, sir? Shall we continue the conversation we were having before I brought up a certain forest in Estonia and your various activities there, and you decided to practice your fifty-yard dash?"

The man began to cry, and Ian looked at the blue sparkle of the lake, fighting his usual sense of anticlimax. The man dissolving in tears on the ground had been an SS Sturmbannführer in Einsatzgruppe D, who had ordered the shooting of a hundred and fifty men in Estonia in 1941. *More than that*, Ian thought. Those eastern death squads had put hundreds of thousands in the ground in shallow trenches. But one hundred and fifty was what he had the documentation for in his office back in Vienna: testimony from a shaky-handed gray-faced pair of survivors who had managed to flee. One hundred and fifty was enough to bring the man to trial, perhaps put a rope around a monster's neck.

Moments like this should have been glorious, and they never were. The monsters always looked so ordinary and pathetic, in the flesh.

“I didn’t do it,” the man gulped through his tears. “Those things you said I did.”

Ian just looked at him.

“I only did what the others did. What I was ordered to do. It was *legal*—”

Ian took a knee beside the man, raising his chin with one finger. Waited until those red-rimmed eyes met his own. “I have no interest in your orders,” he said quietly. “I have no interest if it was legal at the time. I have no interest in your excuses. You’re a cringing soulless trigger-pulling lackey, and I will see you face a judge.”

The man flinched. Ian rose and turned away, swallowing the rage red and raw before it burst out of him and he beat the man to a pulp. It was always the damned line about *orders* that made him want to tear throats open. *They all say it, don’t they?* That was when he wanted to sink his hands around their throats and stare into their bewildered eyes as they died choking on their excuses.

Judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts, and men have lost their reason . . . Ian let out a slow, controlled breath. *But not me.* Control was what separated men from beasts, and *they* were the beasts.

“Sit on him until the arrest,” he told Tony tersely, and he went back to their hotel to make a telephone call.

“Bauer,” a voice rasped.

Ian crooked the receiver to his right ear, the one that wasn’t faintly hearing-damaged from an unlucky air raid in Spain in ’37, and switched to German, which he knew still had a wintry British tang despite all his years abroad. “We got him.”

“Heh. I’ll start putting pressure on the state prosecutor in Bonn, push to put the *Hurensohn* on trial.”

“Put that prosecutor’s feet to the fire, Fritz. I want this son of a bitch in front of the hardest judge in Bonn.”

Fritz Bauer grunted. Ian envisioned his friend, sitting behind his desk in Braunschweig, puffs of gray hair around his balding head, smoking his perpetual cigarettes. He’d run from Germany to Denmark to Sweden during the war, steps ahead of having a

yellow star slapped on his arm and being shipped east. He and Ian had met after the first of the Nuremberg trials—and a few years ago, when the official war crimes investigation teams were being shut down for lack of funding, and Ian had started his own operation with Tony, he'd turned to Bauer. "We find the guilty," Ian proposed over a tumbler of scotch and half a pack of cigarettes, "and you see them prosecuted."

"We won't make friends," Bauer had warned with a mirthless smile, and he was right. The man they'd caught today might see a prison cell for his crimes, he might get off with a slap, or he might never be tried at all. It was five years after the end of the war, and the world had moved on. Who cared anymore about punishing the guilty? "Let them alone," a judge had advised Ian not long ago. "The Nazis are beaten and done. Worry about the Russkies now, not the Germans."

"You worry about the next war," Ian had replied evenly. "Someone has to sweep up the muck of the last one."

"Who's next on your list?" Bauer asked now over the telephone.

Die Jägerin, Ian thought. *The huntress*. But there were no leads to her whereabouts, not for years. "There's a Sobibór guard I'm tracing. I'll update his file when I get back to Vienna."

"Your center is getting a reputation. Third arrest this year—"

"None of them big fish." Eichmann, Mengele, Stangl—the bigger names were far beyond Ian's limited reach, but that didn't bother him much. He couldn't put pressure on foreign governments, couldn't fight massive deportation battles, but what he *could* do was search for the lesser war criminals gone to ground in Europe. And there were so many of them, clerks and camp guards and functionaries who had played their part in the great machine of death during the war. They couldn't all be tried at Nuremberg; there hadn't been the manpower, the money, or even the *interest* in anything so huge in scale. So a few were put on trial—however many would fit on the bench, in some cases, which Ian found starkly, darkly ironic—and the rest just went home. Returned to their families after the war, hung up their uniforms, perhaps took a new name or moved

to a new town if they were cautious . . . but still just went back to Germany and pretended it had all never happened.

People asked Ian sometimes why he'd left the gritty glamour of a war correspondent's work for this dogged, tedious slog after war criminals. A life spent chasing the next battle and the next story wherever it led, from Franco's rise in Spain to the fall of the Maginot Line to everything that followed—hammering out a column on deadline while hunched under a tarp that barely kept off the beating desert sun, playing poker in a bombed-out hotel waiting for transport to arrive, sitting up to his shins in seawater and vomit as a landing craft crammed with green-faced soldiers neared a stretch of beach . . . Terror to tedium, tedium to terror, forever vibrating between both for the sake of a byline.

He'd traded all that for a tiny office in Vienna piled with lists; for endless interviews with cagey witnesses and grieving refugees; for no byline at all. "Why?" Tony had asked soon after they began working together, gesturing around the four walls of their grim office. "Why go to this, from that?"

Ian had given a brief, slanted smile. "Because it's the same work, really. Telling the world that terrible things happened. But when I was hammering out columns during the war, what did all those words accomplish? Nothing."

"Hey, I knew plenty of boys in the ranks who lived for your column. Said it was the only one out there besides Ernie Pyle's that wrote for the dogface with boots on the ground and not the generals in tents."

Ian shrugged. "If I'd bought it on a bombing run over Berlin when I went out with a Lancaster crew, or got torpedoed on the way back from Egypt, there'd have been a hundred other scribblers to fill my place. People *want* to read about war. But there's no war now, and no one wants to hear about war criminals walking free." Ian made the same gesture at the four walls of the office. "We don't write headlines now, we *make* them, one arrest at a time. One grudging drop of newspaper ink at a time. And unlike all those columns I wrote about war, there aren't too many people queuing up behind

us to do this work. What we do here? We accomplish something a good deal more important than anything I ever managed to say with a byline. Because no one wants to hear what we have to say, and someone has to make them listen.”

“So why won’t you write up any of our catches?” Tony had shot back. “More people might listen if they see your byline front and center.”

“I’m done writing instead of doing.” Ian hadn’t written a word since the Nuremberg trials, even though he’d been a journalist since he was nineteen, a lanky boy storming out of his father’s house shouting he was going to damned well work for a living and not spend his life sipping scotch at the club and droning about how the country was going to the dogs. More than fifteen years spent over a typewriter, honing and stropping his prose until it could cut like a razor’s edge, and now Ian didn’t think he’d ever put his name on an article again.

He blinked, realizing how long he’d been woolgathering with the telephone pressed to his ear. “What was that, Fritz?”

“I said, three arrests in a year is something to celebrate,” Fritz Bauer repeated. “Get a drink and a good night’s sleep.”

“I haven’t had a good night’s sleep since the Blitz,” Ian joked, and rang off.

The nightmares that night were particularly bad. Ian dreamed of twisting parachutes tangled in black trees, waking with a muffled shout in the hotel room’s anonymous darkness. “No parachute,” he said, hardly hearing himself over the hammering of his own heart. “No parachute. No parachute.” He walked naked to the window, threw open the shutters to the night air, and lit a cigarette that tasted like a petrol can. He exhaled smoke, leaning against the sill to look out over a dark city. He was thirty-eight, he had chased two wars across half the globe, and he stood till dawn thinking in boundless rage-filled hunger of a woman standing on the shore of Lake Rusalka.

“**YOU NEED TO** get laid,” Tony advised.

Ian ignored him, typing up a quick report for Bauer on the typewriter he’d carried since running around the desert after Patton’s

boys. They were back in Vienna, gray and bleak with its burned-out shell of the state opera house still bearing witness to the war's passing, but a vast improvement on Cologne, which had been bombed to rubble and was still little more than a building site around a chain of lakes.

Tony balled up a sheet of foolscap and threw it at Ian. "Are you listening to me?"

"No." Ian flung the ball back. "Chuck that in the bin, we haven't got a secretary to pick up after you." The Vienna Refugee Documentation Center on the Mariahilferstrasse didn't have a lot of things. The war crimes investigation teams Ian had worked with just after the war had called for officers, drivers, interrogators, linguists, pathologists, photographers, typists, legal experts—a team of at least twenty, well appointed, well budgeted. (Not that the teams ever *got* all those things, but at least they tried.) The center here had only Tony, who acted as driver, interrogator, and linguist, and Ian, who took the mantle of typist, clerk, and very poor photographer. Ian's annuity from his long-dead father barely covered rent and living expenses. *Two men and two desks, and we expect to move mountains*, Ian thought wryly.

"You're brooding again. You always do when we make an arrest. You go off in a Blue Period like a goddamn Picasso." Tony sorted through a stack of newspapers in German, French, English, and something Cyrillic Ian couldn't read. "Take a night off. I've got a redhead in Ottakring, and she has a knockout roommate. Take her out, tell her a few stories about throwing back shots with Hemingway and Steinbeck after Paris was liberated—"

"It wasn't nearly as picturesque as you make it sound."

"So? Talk it up! You've got glamour, boss. Women love 'em tall, dark, and tragic. You're six long-lean-and-mean feet of heroic war stories and unhappy past—"

"Oh, for God's sake—"

"—all buttoned up behind English starch and a thousand-yard stare of *you can't possibly understand the things that haunt me*. That's absolute catnip for the ladies, believe me—"

“Are you finished?” Ian drew the sheet out of the typewriter, tipping his chair back on two legs. “Go through the mail, then pull the file on the Bormann assistant.”

“Fine, die a monk.”

“Why do I put up with you?” Ian wondered. “Feckless cretinous Yank . . .”

“Joyless Limey bastard,” Tony shot back, rummaging in the file cabinet. Ian hid a grin, knowing perfectly well why he put up with Tony. Ranging across three fronts of the war with a typewriter and notepad, Ian had met a thousand Tonys: aching young men in rumpled uniforms, heading off into the mouth of the guns. American boys jammed on troopships and green with seasickness, English boys flying off in Hurricanes with a one in four chance of making it back . . . after a while Ian couldn’t bear to look at any of them too closely, knowing better than they did what their chances were of getting out alive. It had been just after the war ended that he met Tony, slouching along as an interpreter in the entourage of an American general who clearly wanted him court-martialed and shot for insubordination and slovenliness. Ian sympathized with the feeling now that Sergeant A. Rodomovsky worked for him and not the United States Army, but Tony was the first young soldier Ian had been able to befriend. He was brash, a practical joker, and a complete nuisance, but when Ian shook his hand for the first time, he’d been able to think, *This one won’t die.*

Unless I kill him, Ian thought now, *next time he gets on my nerves.* A distinct possibility.

He finished the report for Bauer and rose, stretching. “Get your earplugs,” he advised, reaching for his violin case.

“You’re aware you don’t have a future as a concert violinist?” Tony leafed through the stack of mail that had accumulated in their absence.

“I play poorly yet with great lack of feeling.” Ian brought the violin to his chin, starting a movement of Brahms. Playing helped him think, kept his hands busy as his brain sorted through the questions that rose with every new chase. *Who are you, what did you do, and*

where would you go to get away from it? He was drawing out the last note as Tony let out a whistle.

“Boss,” he called over his shoulder, “I’ve got news.”

Ian lowered his bow. “New lead?”

“Yes.” Tony’s eyes sparked triumph. “*Die Jägerin.*”

A trapdoor opened in Ian’s stomach, a long drop over the bottomless pit of rage. He put the violin back in its case, slow controlled movements. “I didn’t give you that file.”

“It’s the one at the back of the drawer you look at when you think I’m not paying attention,” Tony said. “Believe me, I’ve read it.”

“Then you know it’s a cold trail. We know she was in Poznań as late as November ’44, but that’s all.” Ian felt excitement starting to war with caution. “So what did you find?”

Tony grinned. “A witness who saw her later than November ’44. After the war, in fact.”

“*What?*” Ian had been pulling out his file on the woman who was his personal obsession; he nearly dropped it. “Who? Someone from the Poznań region, or Frank’s staff?” It had been during the first Nuremberg trial that Ian caught *die Jägerin*’s scent, hearing a witness testify against Hans Frank—the governor general of Nazi-occupied Poland, whom Ian would later (as one of the few journalists admitted to the execution room) watch swing from a rope for war crimes. In the middle of the information about the Jews Frank was shipping east, the clerk had testified about a certain visit to Poznań. One of the high-ranking SS officers had thrown a party for Frank out by Lake Rusalka, at a big ocher-colored house . . .

Ian, at that point, had already had a very good reason to be searching for the woman who had lived in that house. And the clerk on the witness stand had been a guest at that party, where the SS officer’s young mistress had played hostess.

“Who did you find?” Ian rapped out at Tony, mouth dry with sudden hope. “Someone who remembers her? A name, a bloody photograph—” It was the most frustrating dead end of this file: the clerk at Nuremberg had met the woman only once, and he’d been drunk through most of the party. He didn’t remember her name,

and all he could describe was a young woman, dark haired, blue eyed. Difficult to track a woman without knowing anything more than her nickname and her coloring. “What did you *find*?”

“Stop cutting me off, dammit, and I’ll tell you.” Tony tapped the file. “*Die Jägerin*’s lover fled to Altaussee in ’45. No sign he took his mistress with him from Poznań—but now, it’s looking like he did. Because I’ve located a girl in Altaussee whose sister worked a few doors down from the same house where our huntress’s lover had holed up with the Eichmanns and the rest of that crowd in May ’45. I haven’t met the sister yet, but she apparently remembers a woman who looked like *die Jägerin*.”

“That’s all?” Ian’s burst of hope ebbed as he recalled the pretty little spa town on a blue-green lake below the Alps, a bolt-hole for any number of high-ranking Nazis as the war ended. By May ’45 it had been crawling with Americans making arrests. Some fugitives submitted to handcuffs, some managed to escape. *Die Jägerin*’s SS officer had died in a hail of bullets rather than be taken—and there had been no sign of his mistress. “I’ve already combed Altaussee looking for leads. Once I knew her lover had died there, I went looking—if she’d been there too, I would have found her trail.”

“Look, you probably came on like some Hound of Hell from the Spanish Inquisition, and everyone clammed up in terror. Subtlety is not your strong suit. You come on like a wrecking ball that went to Eton.”

“Harrow.”

“Same thing.” Tony fished for his cigarettes. “I’ve been doing some lighter digging. All that driving around Austria we did last December, looking for the Belsen guard who turned out to have gone to Argentina? I took weekends, went to Altaussee, asked questions. I’m good at that.”

He was. Tony could talk to anyone, usually in their native language. It was what made him good at this job, which so often hinged on information eased lightly out of the suspicious and the wary. “Why did you put in all this effort on your own time?” Ian asked. “A cold case—”

“Because it’s the case you *want*. She’s your white whale. All these bastards”—Tony waved a hand at the filing cabinets crammed with documentation on war criminals—“you want to nab them all, but the one you *really* want is her.”

He wasn’t wrong. Ian felt his fingers tighten on the edge of the desk. “White whale,” he managed to say, wryly. “Don’t tell me you’ve read Melville?”

“Of course not. Nobody’s read *Moby-Dick*; it just gets assigned by overzealous teachers. I went to a recruiter’s office the day after Pearl Harbor; that’s how I got out of reading *Moby-Dick*.” Tony shook out a cigarette, black eyes unblinking. “What I want to know is, why *die Jägerin*?”

“You’ve read her file,” Ian parried.

“Oh, she’s a nasty piece of work, I’m not arguing that. That business about the six refugees she killed after feeding them a meal—”

“Children,” Ian said quietly. “Six Polish children, somewhere between the ages of four and nine.”

Tony stopped in the act of lighting his cigarette, visibly sickened. “Your clipping just said refugees.”

“My editor considered the detail too gruesome to include in the article. But they were children, Tony.” That had been one of the harder articles Ian had ever forced himself to write. “The clerk at Frank’s trial said that, at the party where he met her, someone told the story about how she’d dispatched six children who had probably escaped being shipped east. An amusing little anecdote over hors d’oeuvres. They toasted her with champagne, calling her *the huntress*.”

“Goddamn,” Tony said, very softly.

Ian nodded, thinking not only of the six unknown children who had been her victims, but of two others. A fragile young woman in a hospital bed, all starved eyes and grief. A boy just seventeen years old, saying eagerly *I told them I was twenty-one, I ship out next week!* The woman and the boy, one gone now, the other dead. *You did that*, Ian thought to the nameless huntress who filled up his sleepless nights. *You did that, you Nazi bitch.*

Tony didn't know about them, the girl and the young soldier. Even now, years later, Ian found it difficult. He started marshaling the words, but Tony was already scribbling an address, moving from discussion to action. For now, Ian let it go, fingers easing their death grip on the desk's edge.

"That's where the girl in Altaussee lives, the one whose sister might have seen *die Jägerin*," Tony was saying. "I say it's worth going to talk in person."

Ian nodded. Any lead was worth running down. "When did you get her name?"

"A week ago."

"Bloody hell, a *week*?"

"We had the Cologne chase to wrap up. Besides, I was waiting for one more confirmation. I wanted to give you more good news, and now I can." Tony tapped the letter from their mail stack, scattering ash from his cigarette. "It arrived while we were in Cologne."

Ian scanned the letter, not recognizing the black scrawl. "Who's this woman and why is she coming to Vienna . . ." He got to the signature at the bottom, and the world stopped in its tracks.

"Our one witness who actually met *die Jägerin* face-to-face and lived," Tony said. "The Polish woman—I pulled her statement and details from the file."

"She emigrated to England, why did you—"

"The telephone number was noted. I left a message. Now she's coming to Vienna."

"You really shouldn't have contacted Nina," Ian said quietly.

"Why not? Besides this potential Altaussee lead, she's the only eyewitness we've got. Where'd you find her, anyway?"

"In Pozna after the German retreat in '45. She was in hospital when she gave me her statement, with all the details she could remember." Vividly Ian recalled the frail girl in the ward cot, limbs showing sticklike from a smock borrowed from the Polish Red Cross. "You shouldn't have dragged her halfway across Europe."

"It was her idea. I only wanted to talk by telephone, see if I could

get any more detail about our mark. But if she's willing to come here, let's make use of her."

"She also happens to be—"

"What?"

Ian paused. His surprise and disquiet were fading, replaced by an unexpected flash of devilry. He so rarely got to see his partner nonplussed. *You spring a surprise like this on me*, Ian thought, *you deserve to have one sprung on you*. Ian wouldn't have chosen to yank the broken flower that was Nina Markova halfway across the continent, but she was already on the way, and there was no denying her presence would be useful for any number of reasons . . . including turning the tables on Tony, which Ian wasn't too proud to admit he enjoyed doing. Especially when his partner started messing about with cases behind Ian's back. Especially *this* case.

"She's what?" Tony asked.

"Nothing," Ian answered. Aside from pulling the ground out from under Tony, it might be good to see Nina. They did have matters to discuss that had nothing to do with the case, after all. "Just handle her carefully when she arrives," he added, that part nothing but truthful. "She had a bad war."

"I'll be gentle as a lamb."

FOUR DAYS PASSED, and a flood of refugee testimony came in that needed categorizing. Ian forgot all about their coming visitor, until an unholy screeching sounded in the corridor.

Tony looked up from the statement he was translating from Yiddish. "Our landlady getting her feathers ruffled again?" he said as Ian went to the office door.

His view down the corridor was blocked by Frau Hummel's impressive bulk in her flowered housedress, as she pointed to some muddy footprints on her floor. Ian got a bare impression of a considerably smaller woman beyond his landlady, and then Frau Hummel seized the mud-shod newcomer by the arm. Her bellows turned to shrieks as the smaller woman yanked a straight razor

out of her boot and whipped it up in unmistakable warning. The newcomer's face was obscured by a tangle of bright blond hair; all Ian could really take in was the razor held in an appallingly determined fist.

"Ladies, please!" Tony tumbled into the hall.

"Kraut *suka* said she'd call police on me—" The newcomer was snarling.

"Big misunderstanding," Tony said brightly, backing Frau Hummel away and waving the strange woman toward Ian. "If you'll direct your concerns to my partner here, Fräulein—"

"This way." Ian motioned her toward his door, keeping a wary eye on the razor. Rarely did visitors enter quite this dramatically. "You have business with the Refugee Documentation Center, Fräulein?"

The woman folded up that lethally sharp razor and tucked it back into her boot. "Arrived an hour less ago," she said in hodgepodge English as Ian closed the office door. Her accent was strange, somewhere between English and something farther east than Vienna. It wasn't until she straightened and brushed her tangled hair from a pair of bright blue eyes that Ian's heart started to pound.

"Still don't know me from Tom, Dick, or Ivan?" she asked.

Bloody hell, Ian thought, frozen. *She's changed.*

Five years ago she'd lain half starved in a Red Cross hospital bed, all brittle silence and big blue eyes. Now she looked capable and compact in scuffed trousers and knee boots, swinging a disreputable-looking sealskin cap in one hand. The hair he remembered as dull brown was bright blond with dark roots, and her eyes had a cheery, wicked glitter.

Ian forced the words through numb lips. "Hello, Nina."

Tony came banging back in. "The *gnädige Frau's* feathers are duly smoothed down." He gave Nina a rather appreciative glance. "Who's our visitor?"

She looked annoyed. "I sent a letter. You didn't get?" *Her English has improved*, Ian thought. Five years ago they'd barely been able to converse; she spoke almost no English and he almost no Polish.

Their communication in between then and now had been strictly by telegram. His heart was still thudding. This was *Nina* . . . ?

“So you’re—” Tony looked puzzled, doubtless thinking of Ian’s description of a woman who needed gentle handling. “You aren’t quite what I was expecting, Miss Markova.”

“Not Miss Markova.” Ian raked a hand through his hair, wishing he’d explained it all four days ago, wishing he hadn’t had the impulse to turn the tables on his partner. Because if anyone in this room had had the tables turned on them, it was Ian. *Bloody hell*. “The file still lists her birth name. Tony Rodomovsky, allow me to introduce Nina Graham.” The woman in the hospital bed, the woman who had seen *die Jägerin* face-to-face and lived, the woman now standing in the same room with him for the first time in five years, a razor in her boot and a cool smile on her lips. “My wife.”