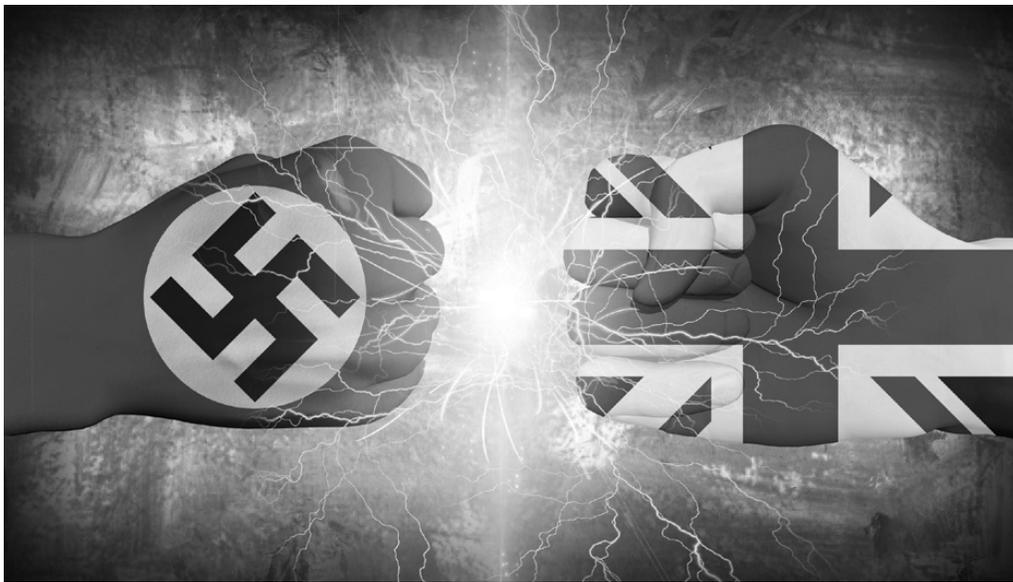




# All That Remains



by  
**Robin Melhuish**

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Published by ALT PUBLISH  
P.O. Box 51, Emmett, ID. 83617

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For information address ALT PUBLISH, P.O. Box 51,  
Emmett, ID. 83617

First Alt Publish trade paperback printing June 2017

Cover & interior design by William Gensburger

Image of girl © 2017 Constantin Opris

Printed in the U.S.A.

ISBN: 978-0-9977227-1-0

*[Publisher note: Spellings in this book  
conform to the British version.]*

# What Readers Had to Say About This Book:

“Robin intricately weaves an intellectual cast of characters against a backdrop of page-turning plots. Historians have often asked how could these atrocities have happened? Robin’s book accurately explores the events, politics and emotions that would ultimately draw a worldwide response to the unthinkable. Great book!”

*~Natalie Hurst, News Anchor,  
KBOI-2 TV*

“A gripping story that grasps the reader in the first few pages. Robin has a special gift for guiding his readers through a historically accurate maze.”

*~Kurt Koontz, Author, ‘A Million Steps’*

“Sometimes it only takes a few bars of a song to pull you into it. Same thing for great movies. This book, *All That Remains*, is one of those. It pulls you right into the story without getting trampled by back story. And what’s more, it doesn’t stop throughout the entire book. A fun roller-coaster ride that will keep you spellbound, I guarantee it.”

~ *Cliff Hitchcock, Insurance agent and musician?*

“Robin Melhush writes wonderfully. He is a master story teller, and keeps the reader totally engaged! The reality of the novel gripped me. I couldn’t put it down.”

~ *Henry Ohaegbulam, Reader*

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“A fantastic, historically accurate page-turner. Robin Melhuish nails it with this excellent story.”

~ *Alexander Greene, Reviewer*

“I couldn’t put it down until the clever twist at the end.”

~ *Sarah Poulson, Reader*

“Damn those Nazis! The author made me want to keep reading!”

~ *Reza Azevedo, Retail Buyer*

“It’s difficult to find a good story, especially one based on true events. Well done.”

~ *Addisen Clarkson, Reader*

“So many twists and unexpected happenings. I was only sorry when I turned the last page. A SUPER READ!”

~ *Kasia Macioszek*



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To the many wonderful people, some of whose anecdotal tales have found their way into this book. In particular I would like to thank the German War Graves Commission for their work.

Special appreciation goes to the members of the *Bund Deutsche Philatelisten*, whose working groups on the provisional stamps issued under Allied occupation in 1945 gave invaluable insight into those times.

Also to Yasmin, my lovely wife, for all her support.



# DEDICATION



*To my late father for the inspiration, just sorry he couldn't see it finished. The hero is not called Alastair without good reason.*



# Cast of Characters

In order of appearance.

- **Gertrud Ludwig**, (born Weber), born 1899, daughter of Peter Weber (a high ranking German Nationalist). She is a school teacher, war widow and worshipper of the nationalist ideas of her father and his friends; these include Hitler, Himmler, Hess, Göbbels and co. She has a daughter, Anna, whom she thinks is a burden rather than a blessing.

- **Anna Ludwig**, daughter of Gertrud, her father, a German soldier fell at Verdun in 1918.

- **Ilse Schatzing**, born 1906. She is Anna's nanny, a bit slow, poorly educated and taken in by the nationalist indoctrination and peer pressure. She romances about handsome men in uniforms. She is plump and unattractive.

- **Peter Weber**, Gertrud's father, former Chairman of the local *Deutsche Arbeits Partei* (DAP) and founder Member of the *NSDAP* (Nazi Party).

- **Hans Mayr** Confidant of Peter Weber and friend of Göbbels.

- **Martin Bormann** started as media coordinator for NSDAP in 1920, became a prominent official in Nazi Germany as head of the Nazi Party Chancellery. He gained immense power within the Third Reich by using his position as Adolf Hitler's private secretary.

He had much influence and is a cold hearted planner who would literally climb over corpses to get what he wants. He was a known womaniser with several illegitimate children. Adolf Hitler was godfather to his first son Adolf (Named after the Führer).

- **Heinrich Luitpold Himmler**, was founder of and later *Reichsführer* of the *Schutzstaffel* (Protection Squadron; SS), and a leading member of the Nazi Party (NSDAP) of Nazi Germany.

- **Rudolf Hess**: (1894-1987), Deputy Führer and the number 2 in power in Hitler's Germany. Hess was a member of Hitler's

the British, but he ended up being captured and long-term-imprisoned. Hitler saw Hess's actions as a personal betrayal and stripped him of all his positions in the party.

- **Albert Speer**, *Reichsarchitekt* was a German architect who was, for most of World War II, Minister of Armaments and War Production for Nazi Germany.

- **Siegfried Taubert**, SS *Obersturmbannführer*, NSDAP member since 1931. Ex Piano salesman, who became commander of XXth SS Transport Command, and Commandant of the SS School of Wewelsburg. Reportedly he died in Kiel May 1946.

- **Alastair Wainright**, a tall handsome Englishman, born in February 1950, Sales & Marketing Manager for a big UK Automotive Company, seconded to the German subsidiary in the light of accounting irregularities discovered there. A passionate collector of German stamps with a keen interest in history.

- **Arthur Henderson Miller**, American Lieutenant, buried in an SS war grave at Friedenstal Böddeken, Westfalia, Germany.

- **Werner Schellenburg**, SS officer, liaison between Bormann and his contacts in England.

- **Sir Valentine Morris**, Parliamentary Undersecretary for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Well-connected civil servant, Nazi sympathiser, connected to Bormann via Schellenburg, who he was in boarding school in Switzerland with.

- **Ralph Webber**, first born of the Lebensborn project. Son of Martin Bormann. Indoctrinated at the SS School in Wewelsburg, trained Abwehr Specialist, infiltrated into Britain, works with Sir Valentine Morris and Anna. Later becomes Capt. Webber, British intelligence corps in the Allied Control Commission (De-Nazification Process). Instrumental in the capture of Hans Frank, he drops off the radar at the end of 1946.

- **Annegret (Greta) Schwarz**, Austrian prostitute, poor family and Jewish background, she is saved by Schellenburg from the Ghettos of Vienna. She becomes his housekeeper and personal concubine. Later runs brothels and clubs in Vienna, after the

tegau). Hanged at Landsberg Prison 1946, after Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunals.

- ***Dr Helen Dresser***, a Dentist born in 1945 Chemnitz in the Soviet occupied zone, she inherits a house in Cologne. Alastair Wainright is attracted to her, a feeling which becomes mutual.

- ***Rainer (no surname)***, acquaintance of Alastair via his late father from local philatelic association. Alastair and Rainer are good friends. Rainer runs the local bar. Rainer contributes some philatelic material from his father's estate.

- ***Jürgen (Sellin)*** Born 1918, Army veteran from Eastern Front 1945, retired council worker. Escapes the war with an important story which he tells in Rainer's bar.

- ***Joseph Bush and John Morgan***, American bankers.

- ***Admiral Ritkow***, German Admiral in charge of Baltic operations.

- ***Frau Gärtner***, proprietor of a small hotel in Vienna.

- ***Tatiana***, Beautiful Slovenian barmaid in Vienna, employed by Greta.

- ***Herr Berger***, Austrian customer of Alastair Wainright.

- ***Manfred Karstein Snr***, a Swiss banker.

- ***Birgitt Dresser***, travelling companion of Anna's whom she picked up on the journey to Chemnitz in May 1945. Birgitt lost her husband, baby and house in the bombing of the allied advance into the western side of Cologne. Helen's birth is registered by her.

- ***General Rose***, the highest ranking casualty killed by enemy fire in the European theatre of operations. He was killed on April 1st, 1945 near Paderborn. The 'Battle of Paderborn', was a diversionary tactic to enable a commando unit of the SS to get through to Wewelsburg.

- ***Ernst Kaltenbrunner***, Heinrich Himmler's deputy. He in

structed *Sturmabfuhrer* SS man Heinrich Macher, and a group of commandos, to penetrate American lines and get to the Wewelsburg; which he did successfully.

•*Hansen*, company liquidator.

•**Karl Frank**, SS officer in charge of a convoy transporting works of art and valuables to the Reichszentrallager (Central storage point) at Nordhausen in the Harz Mountains. He is the surviving brother of Hans Frank, but had nothing to do with Wewelsburg in real life.

•*Herr Foringer*, Viennese brothel keeper who helps Anna.

•**Adolf Eichmann**, Nazi war criminal who escapes via the 'Rat run' to Argentina where he was kidnapped by Israeli secret service, later tried and hanged in Israel in 1962.

•*Anton Karstein*, son of Manfred Karstein, also working for the Canton Zug Bank in Zug in Switzerland.

*Note: Fictitious character names are in italics.*



*Map of Battle of Paderborn*

*"I'll start with the beginning, if any story ever has a true beginning. I've tried to go back as far as my imagination and memory will take me, but even at that, I'll never be sure if it's the real beginning."*

*~Alastair Wainright, Cologne 1982*



# Chapter One

## MUNICH

Nov 1923

Saturday morning school classes were always boisterous, but today there was something different in the air. Gertrud was frantic; the school class she'd been teaching had been particularly restless, it was as if the children knew that something was happening. She was flustered, thinking about the events of last night as she hurried down the road towards the market.

Hitler's take-over of the election meeting had gone to plan, he had made his speech and the people had been galvanised. She wished that she'd been able to stay longer there to discuss the next moves with the Party heads, but to her frustra-

tion, she had to get home to tend to her daughter.

Since her husband had fallen in the 'Great War'; she'd had the responsibility for the 'accident' from his last leave; a baby she'd never wanted. A baby which increasingly interfered with her political ambitions in the new Party of Germany. Gertrud was out of breath as she turned the corner to see Ilse, her nanny, waiting for her on the bench in the market hall.

Unmoved at the sight of her daughter happily hunched down counting the carrots in the shopping basket, Gertrud greeted the nanny. 'Has she behaved this morning?' The question more a formality than one of interest.

Ilse was used to the mother's coldness towards her daughter. She scooped the squealing 4 year old into her arms.

'She's been fine, Frau Lehrerin,' while picking up the basket with the vegetables with her free hand. 'Do we need anything in town?'

'Yes, let's walk, isn't what's happening exciting?'

Ilse just nodded, preoccupied with juggling the child and the shopping, before giving up carrying the girl and concentrating on the vegetables. Little Anna decidedly unimpressed at being dumped, followed them, sullen faced, out into the November cold. Gertrud grilled the nanny for news since she'd been in school, only to be interrupted by the sound of distant shots which caused them to freeze.

'My god, those are shots!'

'There's a march on the parliament building, Frau Lehrerin.' Ilse explained pulling the frightened child to the folds of her skirt.

'How many went?'

'Thousands I think,' Ilse shrugged, 'maybe even more. They

are saying that Hitler got them really wound up last night at the beer hall.'

Gertrud nodded, she knew that, she'd been there. 'Thousands? That would be a miracle!' she considered the news with scepticism, 'A couple of hundred would be more like it', she scoffed. 'Anyway, I need to get some cake for this afternoon,' she turned, leaving the tot in the hands of her nanny to follow as she and strode off toward the baker's shop.

'Frau Lehrerin?' Ilse asked as she caught up.

'Yes.'

'Why are they shooting?'

Gertrud shrugged. 'I hope they are storming the Parliament, getting rid of all those pathetic apologists.'

As usual, there was a queue; people buying cake for their traditional Sunday cake and coffee. Gertrud listened to the excited chatter around her, as she queued. She was thrilled that what her father had been discussing with Mr. Göring and Mr. Himmler behind closed doors, was now actually happening. The conversation snippets around her seemed to be confirming it. People were telling of how the new Party had stormed the Beer Hall the night before, and how Hitler had fired a shot into the ceiling to get attention. One was complaining that the Nationalists had machine guns to stop people from getting out. Gertrud was pleased to hear another voice mentioning that the Army had defected to join the new revolution. Fantastic news, the army is behind us now, she thought with a smile on her face.

Anna came tugged her mother's skirt pointing excitedly at the sweets on the counter.

'We have to wait our turn.' Gertrud's tone was sharp; she was annoyed by the distraction. Anna snivelled, on the verge

of tears as Ilse pulled her close and comforted her.

The commotion caused the man in front to turn, 'I thought you may have been out with them this morning, Frau Lehrerin,' he said as he recognised them.

Gertrud failed to tell if there was sarcasm in the comment or not. The queue shuffled forward, and the man was served. He turned clutching his half-loaf, and doffed his hat politely as he passed her on the way out. She wanted to call out after him to ask why he wasn't out there with the revolution, but then she remembered that he was one of them, a Jew.

'Mummy!' Anna's impatient call brought her back to the fact the assistant was waiting to serve them. With the cake bought, and a piece of broken biscuit for her daughter in hand, the three picked up their bags and left for their usual coffee at Schmidt's café; Gertrud was hoping to hear more news about the revolution there. The Cathedral clock was striking 12:45 pm. They made their way down the street. The sound of more shooting greeted them, nearer now, causing them to speed up. Out of nowhere a panic stricken woman rushed from around the corner, knocking little Anna off her feet. The collision left the young girl crying on the ground as Ilse screamed abuse after the retreating woman. A brown, uniformed horde rushed from around the same corner, threatening to trample them. Ilse dragged Gertrud and her howling daughter into a doorway for protection. They could hear shouted bits of conversation as the men sped past, away from the parliament buildings.

'They had cannons and machine guns waiting for us, did you see that,' one said breathlessly.

'Yes, Max was shot in the face. He can't have survived.'

'... it's the damn Jews behind all this....'

‘Watch out, there are more soldiers in the Cattle Market! We have to split up!’

The disjointed snippets faded into incoherency behind the departing men, as a bullet hit the stone-work above Ilse’s head causing her to scream in alarm and starting Anna crying again. A wall of uniformed soldiers approached, jogging after the fleeing rabble with their bayonets fixed.

‘That’s the 1st Bavarian Infantry,’ Gertrud announced to a puzzled Ilse. ‘The Army betrayed us!’ she snarled as she realised that the Army had not joined them. Ilse had other issues, her hands over her head for protection, and Anna buried in the folds of her dress, sobbing with fright.

‘We should get home,’ Gertrud said, ignoring their plight and setting off briskly. ‘Anna,’ she said, turning to her daughter. ‘Stop snivelling, you’re not hurt, so get up and get on.’ Little Anna pleaded to be carried. ‘You’re old enough walk on your own.’ The mother turned and left the tot to manage on her own as they sidled along the building, allowing more running soldiers to pass.



The house door slammed behind the two breathless men. Hans Mayr sagged back, leaning on the wall, trying get his breath back.

‘Damn, the army should have been on our side. Last night Prime Minister Kahr gave us his word. Hitler and Göring were relying on them,’ he wheezed.

‘Get your coat off,’ Peter ordered, ‘If anyone asks, we’ll say that we’ve been here all morning.’

The drapes were open, the grey day shed little light into the

dimness of the salon. Peter was pleased to see that the maid had taken off the furniture covers and had set the coffee pot in its place on the little porcelain stove. He pulled the curtain back, checking anxiously for signs that they may have been followed. 'Seems like we've escaped. What a victory!'

There was a discrete knock on the door — Gertrud calling out, 'Papa, may I come in, I have news.'

'Come in,' Peter called back. 'You don't mind, do you, Hans?'

Gertrud rushed in, gave her father a kiss on the hand and curtsied to their guest, and then waited for her father to finish his conversation.

'Turning the Prime Minister's political meeting in the Beer Hall into our own was genius, a great opportunity to spread the word.' Peter waxed lyrical about the events in the Beer Hall the night before.

'Hitler's speech was a rhetorical masterpiece,' Hans replied, preening his huge moustache by twirling the ends with his fingers. 'He completely transformed the mood of the people. I have rarely experienced anything like it.'

Gertrud watched them; moustaches may have been the modern trend, but Herr Mayr's was old fashioned, like Bismark's; its colour tainted by the nicotine of too many cigars. Mayr noticed her attention and stopped, dropping his hands self-consciously by his sides.

'We have to stop the Berlin government bowing and scraping to the French,' Peter added, unbuttoning his waistcoat and allowing his ample belly its rightful spread, 'Stresemann and the rest of his government should be hung for treason. The country is in terrible shape; our people are suffering and paying more and more war reparations to France. It's like

admitting that we were wrong in the Great War.

Hans nodded. 'Hitler is right about the Jews. They have profited from the hyper-inflation and are cashing in on every level while Germans are starving. The other territories that are rightfully ours are full of scum, gypsies and worse. We need to take it all back for true Germans.' He finished with a flushed face and ostentatiously pulled a cigar from its leather case, making a ceremony of rolling it between his fingers by his ear before lighting it and filling Gertrud's world with the aromatic smoke.

'What have you heard?' Peter demanded of his daughter, as if she'd just arrived.

'There's been killings, at least one anyway. Someone called Max.' She stood surrounded by the cloud of smoke from Mayr's cigar.

'That's a shame, Max was a good man,' her father said. 'The war and the influenza epidemic have killed off millions, too many of them, good ethnic Germans. There just aren't enough of us.'

Hans took another hefty pull on his cigar, 'We need to change public opinion, adjust peoples' attitudes towards our vision of the new Germany.' The smoke was waved away by her father, who squeezed past the salon table to open the skylight. Street noises came in as the smoke went out.

'That's exactly Hitler's point. How many party members do we have now?' Hans asked waving his smoke away.

Peter paused, '55,000, or there about.'

'Remember we started membership numbering at 500, so there are 500 less.'

'They are not enough, and they are all too old as well,' Gertrud interjected. 'No disrespect Papa, but we should

teach children about the new politics, that way you could get younger people for the cause.'

Her father bristled—he was used to his daughter being opinionated, but this was going too far. He was about to chastise her when his friend interrupted.

'Go on Gertrud, this could be interesting.' Mayr placed his cigar in the ashtray and sat in one of the salon armchairs.

'I'd guess that the members are mostly men, Herr Mayr?' she asked. He nodded, wondering where this was leading. 'How many have children?'

Hans looked stunned, 'Are you suggesting that we tell them to breed more?'

Gertrud cocked an eyebrow at the thought, as an aspect dawned on her, that she hadn't considered before. 'Actually, I'd thought about correct education for the children, setting up schools to educate them in the spirit of the Party.' Her frown showed that she was deep in thought. 'But, what you just mentioned gives me an idea. How about a program for real Aryans? Yes,' her voice was excited now, 'let the Party breed the right kind of Germans. We can educate the children from the cradle.'

'You are suggesting indoctrination from birth?' Her father looked taken aback at his daughter's concept and the speed at which ideas were developing.

Hans nodded sagely, 'We could teach them properly, the boys to be strong and fearless, and the girls to be good mothers, ensure girls to choose the proper fathers for their babies and not to mix with the impure.'

'Now that is something,' Gertrud's father agreed, rubbing his chin, causing Gertrud and Mayr to look at him in anticipation. 'From birth; they wouldn't be tainted with anything

else but our way of thinking.

Gertrud looked thrilled, 'We'd make a centre for education and breeding.'

'That would be a breakthrough,' her father interrupted; Gertrud's excitement was contagious now. 'Pure German women should be encouraged to do a year's service for the Reich, and deliver real Aryan babies.'

'There would be no stigma of babies out of wedlock,' Hans suggested, 'they could leave their babies at the centre for upbringing, or alternatively marry the man.'

'But, it's never going to happen,' Peter said scornfully, looking at his own daughter. 'You think the daughters will just volunteer for the job?'

'Daughters don't volunteer; they do what they are told to do by their fathers, and dutiful daughters obey. We can instruct loyal Party members to put their daughters at the disposal of the Party,' Gertrud said.

'It's a sacrifice some will be glad to make, and when the word spreads, the families will be more than happy to send their girls to us,' Hans proffered springing up from his chair.

'It would need financing though,' Gertrud added, bringing the conversation back down to earth.

'The Party could give a sort of marriage premium, a bonus for the right girl marrying the right party man,' her father said, thinking out loud.

'We have to get the ball rolling. Let me talk to Göbbels on this,' Hans continued. 'Can I use the telephone?'

Gertrud could see the waves of doubt crossing her father's face as he stood transfixed, his huge form silhouetted in front of the window.

'Telephone?' Hans asked again, as if her father hadn't

heard.

‘Sure, in the hallway,’ he answered absently. ‘I thought Göbbels was with Hitler?’

‘He didn’t come out this morning because of his foot— remember he’s crippled; I’ll phone him now.’

Gertrud couldn’t believe that her dream of an education in line with Party doctrine was looking to be possible. Her despondency since her husband had died in the trenches was beginning to lift now. It was looking like her life had a purpose again. Her thoughts were interrupted as the door opened revealing Hans Mayr’s beaming face.

‘Good news,’ he announced, ‘Hitler escaped—he was wounded but not seriously, a stray bullet went through his shoulder. Göbbels likes the idea of babies for the Reich; he will find us a place to start. Munich is too hot for now.’

‘I’m relieved our leader is well,’ Peter said.

Hans pulled his pocket watch from his waistcoat. ‘It’ll be safe for me to leave now. I’ll catch you tomorrow.’

‘I want to run it,’ Gertrud stated emphatically, causing him to stop. ‘Tell Herr Göbbels that I want that job!’

‘Well, there are worse people I suppose,’ he said over his shoulder, shutting the door behind him.

‘It was her idea after all!’ her father called out to the already closed door.



## **Paderborn/Wewelsburg**

**Jan 1924**

Two months later, Gertrud had quit her job and was on

the train to Paderborn with her daughter and their nanny. They were excited as they had never been alone on a long journey before. Anna was bobbing up and down in front of the window of the new compartment carriage, demanding to know what every town and river was called as they passed, disrupting the conversation Gertrud was attempting to have with Ilse.

‘I wonder how far they are with preparations in Wewelsburg,’ she said.

‘Why would they choose Wewelsburg of all places?’ Ilse asked.

‘Anna, sit down! Be quiet!’ Gertrud snapped at her daughter, before turning back to Ilse. ‘Father said the ‘Program’ couldn’t start in Bavaria, too much was compromised after the failed coup. Wewelsburg is safe and out of the way, plus there are many loyal Party supporters there. By the way I read that Hitler is in prison, they are going to try him for treason; father is fuming about that.’

‘Mummy,’ Anna’s plaintive voice broke into their conversation again.

‘What now?’

‘I need the toilet.’

‘You’ve got a nanny for that. You, young lady, must learn to be quiet when adults are talking. Ilse get her out of my sight,’ Ilse took the little girl by the hand and led her out of the compartment.

Minutes later Ilse returned alone, ‘She’s in the corridor watching out of the window,’ Ilse explained.

‘The trial is set for April Fools’ Day,’ Gertrud carried on as if there was no interruption. ‘Just shows what the idiots in Berlin think of Hitler, how insulting is that?’

‘They try to humiliate him as much as possible,’ Ilse said with rare insight.

‘The baby thing worries me more than Hitler at the moment. The program is going to take a lot of work setting it up.’

Little Anna rushed in, gushing that she’d seen a cow outside. Gertrud held her daughter close to her, not out of affection, but to shut her up.

‘You could volunteer,’ she half joked to Ilse, ‘you did say you’d like a baby of your own.’

Ilse blushed deeply, causing Anna to point at her and giggle. ‘I’m not sure; I had images of romance and real love for my child.’

‘You could be the first,’ Gertrud proffered, ‘they’d give you a medal. We could even name the medal after you.’ Her face lit up at the idea. ‘Yes, the Ilse Schatzing medal for services to the Führer.’

‘Oh no, it was your idea, it should be the ‘Ludwig’ medal at least.’

‘Let’s not kid ourselves, we won’t get the honour of naming the medal; the top men will do all that.’

Ilse turned serious and whispered, ‘You’ve had a man and a baby, what’s it like?’ She looked away embarrassed, unsure if she could be so forward, after all, in 1923 in Catholic Munich, intercourse was still a sin out of wedlock.

‘Which bit, the man or the baby?’ Gertrud asked smiling, ‘Well, the first time, thankfully was over quickly.’ She laughed at the memory of Gustav lying panting next to her on the grass in that summer of his last leave; two days before the wedding.

‘Is it wrong to talk so openly about this?’

‘Why not, Gertrud, shrugged, if you’re off to have babies for the Reich, then this is business, so to speak. Are you up for it then? Losing your virginity for the Fatherland?’

Ilse’s attitude changed, softened, ‘Some of those party guys are handsome, aren’t they?’ she asked with a far-away look in her eyes. ‘Princes in black uniforms; I saw the pictures that Himmler gave your father.’

‘The black uniforms are only an idea at the moment; Hugo Boss has just sent suggestions and prototypes for Himmler’s appraisal. My mother told me he is going to set up a personal guard for Herr Hitler.’

‘They will be nice, the men, won’t they?’ Ilse asked with uncertainty in her voice.

‘Of course,’ Gertrud reassured, noting her nanny’s tacit decision, now wondering if she was actually old enough. Then she decided that seventeen was old enough for most things.

Arriving at the main station in Paderborn, the women were met and transported to Wewelsburg by Party officials. They were told that a few of the houses in the centre of the village near the castle had been requisitioned by the Party, and that the school had been taken over as a study centre for racial purity and Party education. The children of the village were pioneering the testing and education that all the project’s children would be getting in due course. Gertrud was proud that her daughter would be one of the first to receive the new education.

They were left in the hands of a plump, peasant faced lady in the late afternoon. Dim lights from the windows of the houses graced their walk down the road, with a happy Anna holding both their hands and skipping between them. The woman who was escorting them through the village an-

nounced proudly that soon young Aryan women from all over Germany would be travelling here to be impregnated by racially selected mates, all of them proud specimens of Germandom. Gertrud was amazed at how fast the word had spread.

‘Where are we headed?’ Ilse asked.

‘This house over here.’ Their escort pointed at a house in front of the silhouette of the ruined castle. The door opened before they could knock.

‘ID cards!’ a man snapped at them, as the door opened. The women produced the cards they had been given. ‘Come in,’ he ordered brusquely, making way for them and reading their cards as he did so. The women stopped and placed their suitcases on the floor in the hallway.

‘Which one is Miss Schatzing?’

Ilse put her hand up timidly, ‘I am,’ she whispered.

‘Are you a volunteer?’

‘Yes.’ Ilse nodded looking at Gertrud blushing.

‘You’re the first, congratulations, you go over there.’ He pointed to a small corridor leading to a large room full of benches, the sort she’d seen at school in the gym. ‘I’ll be with you in a minute to get you settled in.’ He turned to Gertrud, ‘You must be Fraulein Ludwig,’ the man stated. She nodded.

‘Follow me please.’

Gertrud followed the man out of the house across a small yard to a half-timbered building from which the smell of cooking emanated. She realised that she was hungry; their sandwiches long since eaten on their train journey from Munich.

‘In here,’ the man opened the door for her, letting her through, ‘for Mr. Bormann,’ he called into the room, before

turning and leaving Gertrud staring after him.

A quiet voice startled her, 'Take a seat, dears,' a stout woman with a heavy Westphalian dialect ordered. Gertrud, nervous after the first brash encounter, sat timidly on the kitchen stool in front of the huge open fire. An appetising smell of meat stew came from the metal cauldron hanging over it. 'You're cute,' the woman said, leaning over and squeezing Anna's cheek causing her to cry out. 'Hungry?' She asked as she pulled out two bowls and ladled them both a generous portion. Next she placed a heavy ceramic goblet with wine by the side of it.

'I don't drink alcohol,' Gertrud said.

'It's okay,' the woman said, 'you'll be fine. It's quite relaxed here, really.' Gertrud tried the dark red liquid; it was bitter and sour at the same time. 'Drink, you've had a hard day both of you, you'll sleep better. You want some milk?' she asked Anna as Gertrud shut her eyes and downed the wine in one, grimacing as she put the goblet back on the table. To Gertrud's dismay, the goblet was refilled. Anna did likewise with the offered milk.

'Good girl,' the maid praised.

Gertrud was unsure of who the intended recipient of this compliment was as she hungrily attacked the stew.

The door opened, admitting a medium built man wearing an open white shirt and brown trousers. He was about her age.

'My name is Bormann; you're expecting me I hope.' His smile revealed a prominent gap between his front teeth.

'Good evening,' Gertrud stood to greet the man. 'I'm Gertrud Ludwig, my father is Peter Ludwig head of the Deutsche Arbeiter Partei (German Workers' Party) in Munich.'