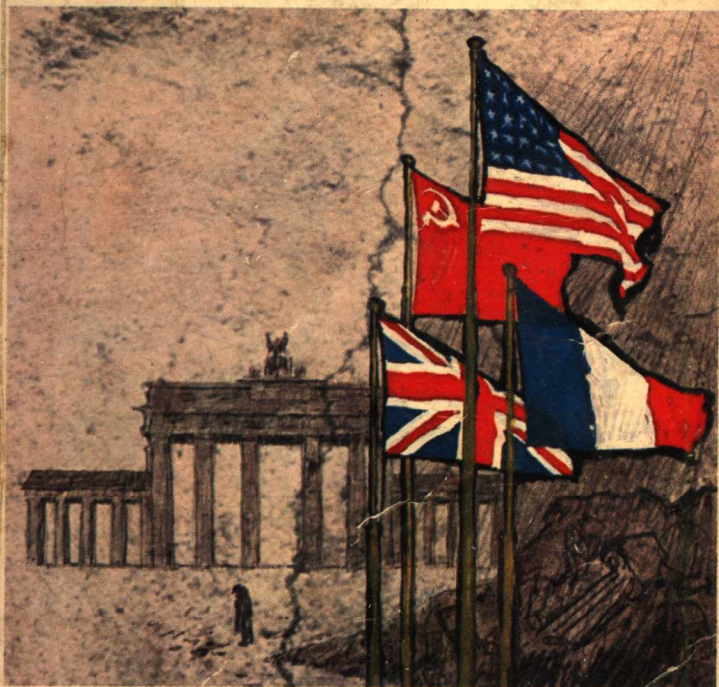


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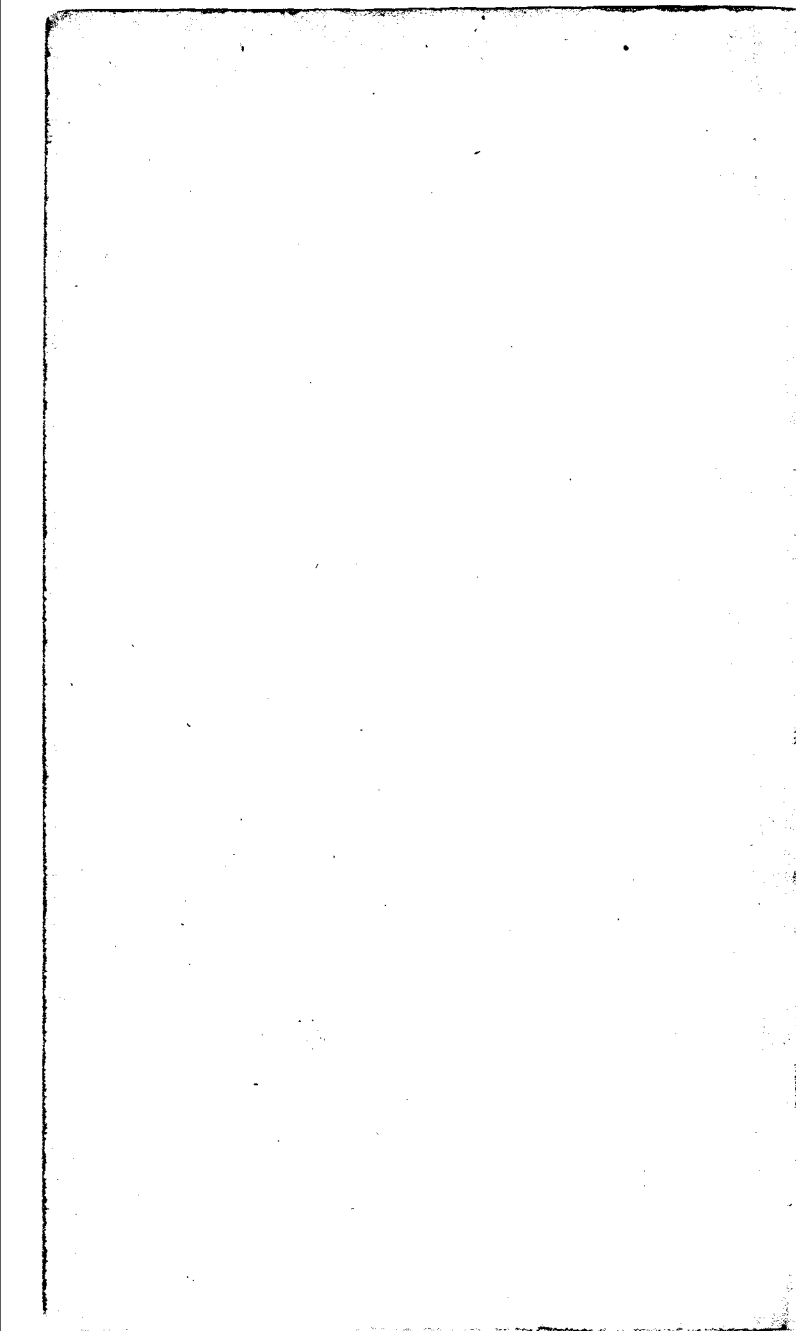
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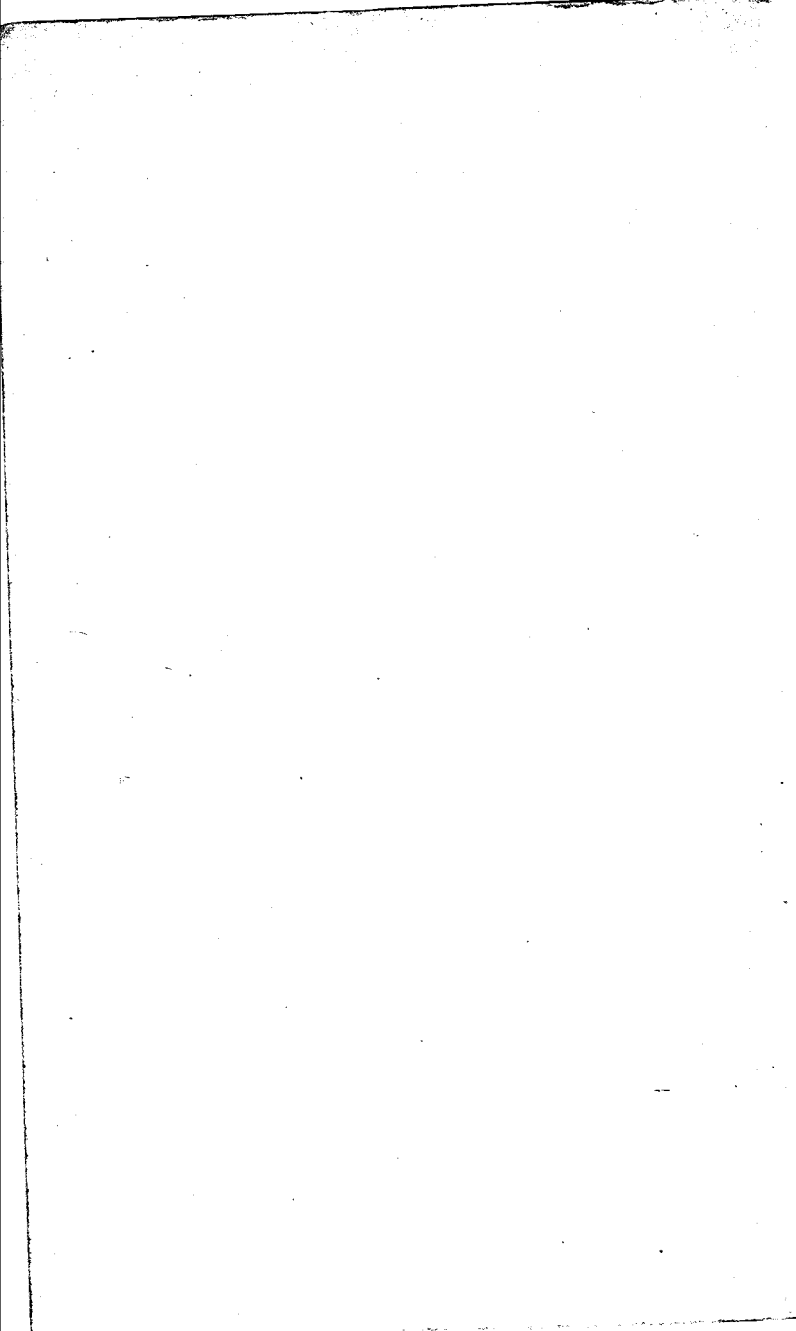
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**Ich Bin Ein Berliner**  
—John F. Kennedy



### **A Note of Thanks**

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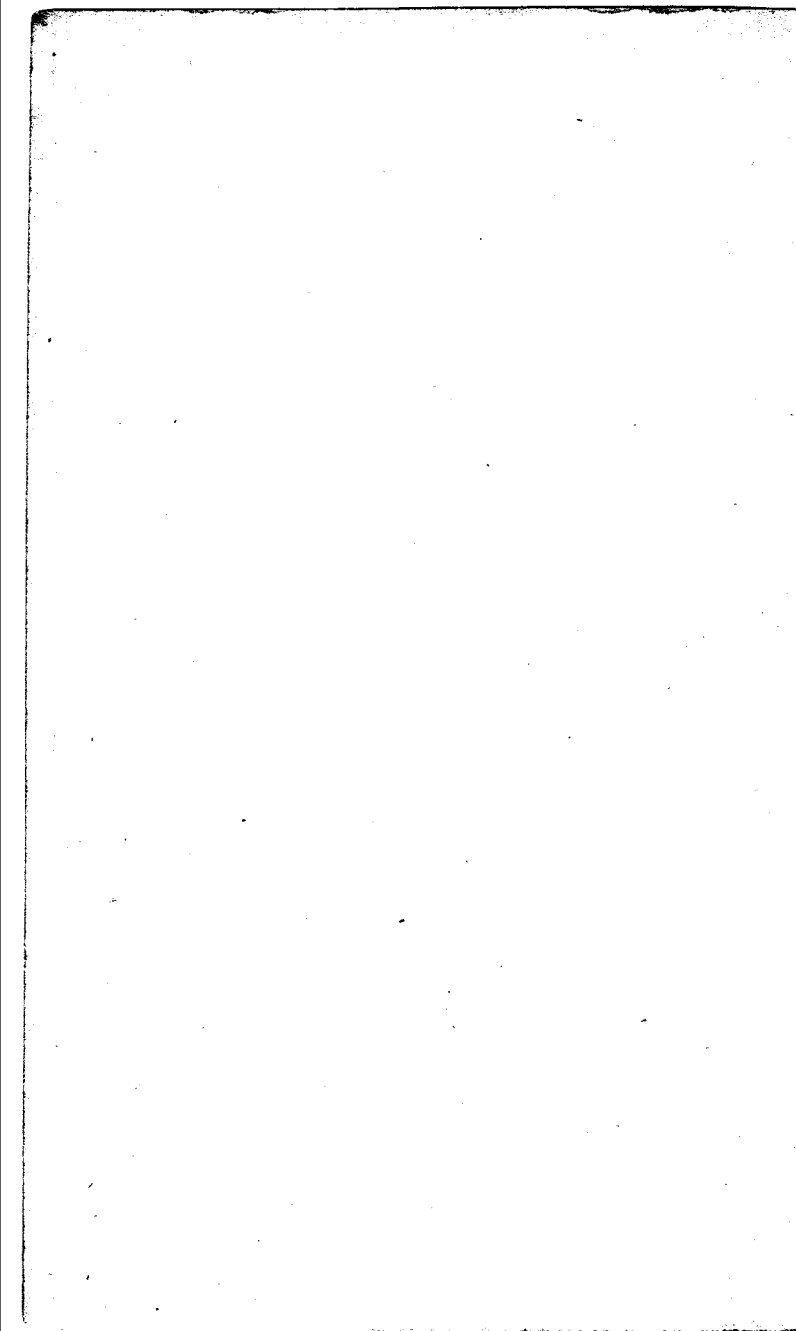
For their logistical support, my deepest gratitude is extended to: General Lucius B. Clay; Father of the Airlift, Lieutenant General William Tunner; and to my good and true friend, Brigadier General Frank Howley, who was Commandant of Berlin in those fearsome days.

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**part 1**  
**A meeting**  
**at the Elbe**



## chapter one

*January, 1944*

Captain Sean O'Sullivan lifted the blackout curtain. A burst of dull light grayed the room. Christ, he thought, doesn't the sun ever shine in London. He heard planes droning overhead toward the English Channel but he could not see them through the thick fog. He wondered if his brother, Tim, was flying today.

"Come to breakfast, dear," Nan called.

Sean turned into the room. It was an elegant room, the most elegant he had ever known. The photograph on the mantle of Major G. Donald Milford stared down at him particularly harshly this morning.

The dining area was an alcove of three angled windows affording a view over Bayswater Road to Kensington Gardens. It was so mucky outside, the view had vanished. Nan Milford added to the opulence of the place in a silk and lace dressing gown. She put his jacket across the back of his chair and mentioned something or other about trying to remove a spot from the sleeve.

Sean sipped the coffee, grimaced, made a mental note to bum some decent coffee from the cook. This British version of ersatz was unfit for consumption in the first place and even worse when Nan got finished overboiling it.

Nan looked pleasantly tired from love-making. She was sad because she had made love so intensely and even sadder because she had fallen in love. She watched him with obvious adoration. "How is it that a handsome Irish brute like you never married?"

"And give up all this?"

"Do be serious for once, Sean."

"The transposition of old country traditions to San Francisco, I guess."

"And how many girls have chased you as I did and how have you avoided them?"

He was about to make a crack about playing it safe with married women but thought better of it. "A bachelor develops a sixth sense that tells him when his sanctity is about to be invaded. All sorts of built-in warning systems send up flares and rockets and bells go off."

She tweaked the end of his nose. "Please," she pleaded.

"Why be serious?"

Nan stiffened. She never got overtly angry . . . only straightened her back, glared, conveyed hurt. "I am sorry I asked."

From time to time Sean was suddenly reminded that Nan could be offended easily, that he had to treat her differently than other women he had known.

"It would be hard for you to comprehend," he said apologetically.

"Am I so without understanding?"

"You've had certain advantages in your life that makes understanding impossible."

"You speak as though I'm a terrible snob."

"You are. But you are a real snob. It is nothing you deliberately cultivated. The world is loaded with people trying to be snobs who just can't make the grade. A genuine, unvarnished snob is a creature to be revered."

She liked to hear Sean talk his lovely gibberish. Of course no man had ever spoken to her that way before. Dear, sweet Donnie sat where Sean sat now. My! What a difference. Nan did not know if Donnie would be more offended by the fact that Sean was in his place or that Sean had the audacity to sit at his table with his sleeves rolled up and his collar unbuttoned.

"Are you trying to say that marriage would have held you from advancing your station?"

"Not at all, Nan. The reasons were more practical."

"Now, I'm completely intrigued."

"I haven't married for the same reason my parents didn't

marry until after a ten-year courtship. He was just too damned poor to support a wife."

He gulped another swallow of the horrible coffee. Nan's soft hand on his lightened the blow. Her fingertips played over his hands. "Please don't stop, Sean. We know so terribly little about each other."

Sean's large brown eyes searched the room and then outside into the mist, looking for nothing. "When my parents emigrated to America all they had was their hands, their backs and their hearts. My father worked harder than the Lord meant any man to work. I can hardly remember when he didn't have two jobs . . . longshoreman by day, watchman by night, cable-car driver by day, janitor by night, hod carrier, ditchdigger, bouncer. And Mom spent most of her life washing dishes and scrubbing floors in places like this. It makes me want to hurt you sometimes and all the other Mrs. G. Donald Milfords whose toilets were cleaned by my mother."

She squeezed his hand tightly to let him know she understood.

"My father always said he didn't come from the old country to raise three Irish cops for the San Francisco police force. His obsession was to put his sons through college. Work now, reward in heaven."

"He must be a remarkable man."

"Yes, he is," Sean answered, "but one day his back gave out and his heart almost gave out too. It was up to mother to keep us alive. Up to me to get through college. I didn't quit. I made it through. Know how? Picking up ten and twenty bucks fighting preliminaries in little clubs around the Bay Area. One of them in San Francisco was called the Bucket of Blood. I was a good boxer, Nan. I didn't want to get hit in the face and have to explain the cuts and bruises to my mother. I fought under the name of Herskowitz, the Battling Yid. How's that? So, the Lord was good. I got through Cal and I went to my mother one day and said, Mom, you don't have to scrub Mrs. G. Donald Milford's floors any more. I'll take care of you."

"Sean . . . I'm sorry."

"Sorry for what? I'd made it and I was going to get my brothers through. We're just a black Irish family which hangs

together. One day I broke my hand in the ring and got this," he said, pointing to the thin white-lined scar over his left eye, "and then my mother knew. From then on I became Schoolboy O'Sullivan the Fighting Prof. Mom nearly died every time I got into the ring." Sean slumped. "So here we are, the brothers O'Sullivan. Tim's up there flying and Liam is in a grave in North Africa. I wanted to get married, had a girl I loved, but my family came first and she wouldn't wait." He dumped an oversized spoon of mulberry marmalade over the muffin to smother the burned taste. "Nan. You're one lousy cook."

She muttered something about the impossibility of getting domestic help. The rest of the meal was in silence. Sean rolled down his sleeves, buttoned them, and fixed his tie and slipped into his jacket. The quiet became uneasy. Every time they said good-by now there was an averting of eyes. The feel of the wet cold clouds from outside had come into the room and engulfed them.

Nan knew that the God who ruled Sean O'Sullivan was pushing him to the end of their affair. "There are so many unsaid things," she whispered.

"Our whole relationship is unsaid, Nan. That photograph of your husband who cannot protest. Your children in the country who remain hidden. The words we never say when we are making love. Six beautiful months of unsaid things."

"They're going to be said now, aren't they, Sean?"

"Kind of looks like it."

A jeep horn sounded from the street below. Beep, be, beep, beep. Nan reacted. "Must he blow that horn and announce your departures to the entire West End of London?"

Sean buttoned his jacket and put on his cap. At this moment she always turned genteel, holding her cheek up for the departing buss as she did for G. Donald Milford. Instead she found herself tight against him. He let her go and she reeled back and watched him disappear down the hall.

Sean hopped into the jeep alongside Second Lieutenant Dante Arosa, who gunned the vehicle away on the fog-wetted pavement.

"Scored last night," Dante said with pride of conquest.

"Little show girl?"

"A living testimony that English women are not cold in bed. Who in the hell libeled them in the first place? Some Irishman?"

Sean was indulgent. Dante was his own age, twenty-eight, but England was his first real experience with life. He had gone from a truck farm in the Napa Valley to the University of San Francisco to an almost too brilliant law career. There was little doubt of Dante Arosa's ability as a counter-intelligence officer on duty, or his somewhat juvenile behavior off duty. Tall, thin young men shouldn't smoke cigars, Sean thought. Dante doesn't clamp the cigar in one side of his mouth solidly. It sort of hangs limply from the front of his teeth.

As they ran alongside Kensington Gardens the traffic thickened. Dante continued his testimony to British womanhood.

"By the way, don't blow the horn."

"Huh?"

"When you pick me up. One, park jeep. Two, emerge. Three, walk to door. Four, ring bell."

Dante shrugged. He didn't like Nan Milford. It was broads like her who gave the English women their bad reputations. Where does she get this Virgin Mary routine? She's just another married broad shacking up behind her husband's back no matter what kind of icing Sean puts on it.

They sank into quietness. Everything was different about London, these days. Everything but the weather. The long, harrowing nights in the bomb shelters were over. The tension had eased. The bombers were going in the other direction these days. There was an air of victory everywhere. People were looking toward the end of the war and it was evident in everyone's voice and step.

"Sean."

"Yes?"

"How far has this thing gone with you and Nan?"

"I wish I knew."

"I'll ring the bell."

Dante Arosa cut the jeep abruptly in the middle of the block. Cars before him screeched to a halt and pedestrians scattered. He beelined for a spike fence that blocked a short, dead-end street named Queen Mother's Gate. Dante hit the



brakes, bringing the tormented vehicle to a halt before the terrified sentry. The sentry saluted half-heartedly and waved them through past the sign on the gatepost which read: **SPECIAL MISSION, MILITARY GOVERNMENT, UNITED STATES ARMY.**

The abbreviated, enclosed street held a half-dozen buildings set about a wide central courtyard. On one side were officers' quarters, enlisted barracks, administration, dispensary, mess hall. Across the courtyard stood two large three-storyed block-granite buildings housing the offices and conference rooms of **SPECIAL MISSION, MILITARY GOVERNMENT.**

From the instant they passed through the gate toward the motor pool the problems of life and love in London were done. Dante and Sean walked crisply in step toward the first of the Mission office buildings.

The directory in the anteroom read:

- Room 101: Civil Administration of German Cities
- Room 102: German Legal Codes
- Room 103: Public Health
- Room 104: Banking System
- Room 105: Displaced Persons/Refugees
- Conference Hall A/B/C: Identification of German Cities.  
Aerial Recon.
- Room 106: Lab.
- Room 201: Counter-Intelligence, Leading Nazis
- Room 202: Counter-Intelligence, Secondary Nazis
- Rooms 203/204/205: Eradication of Nazism
- Room 206: Military Government Orders/Rulings/Manual
- Conference Halls E/F: Identification of Nazis-Nazi Organizations
- Third Floor: Document Center

Off the anteroom they entered the officer of the day's office and signed in, were passed through the locked portal to the inner core of quiet bustle. A second security desk, manned by a sergeant, blocked the hallway.

"Morning," Dante said, leaning over signing the register.

"Morning, sir."

"Morning," Sean said.

"Morning, Captain O'Sullivan. General Hansen wants you in his office at ten hundred. And frankly, sir . . . Eric the Red has the storm flag up."