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By Daniel Silva

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Editorial Review

Review

“An exceptionally readable, sophisticated thriller...Silva ranks...among the best of the younger American spy novelists.”—*The Washington Post*

“A cloak-and-dagger tale [that] moves at a brisk clip, with clean, lucid exposition and characters who are thoughtfully drawn.”—*The New York Times*

“The plot is rich, multilayered and compelling with issues as timely as the daily headlines and problems as old as humankind...Silva maintains tension and suspense.”—*The Denver Post*

“Enthralling...a thriller that entertains as well as enlightens.”—*The Orlando Sentinel*

“Smooth and compelling.”—*Detroit Free Press*

“Silva's sophisticated treatment, polished prose, an edgy mood, and convincing research give his plot a crisp, almost urgent quality.”—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

“Silva knows how to plot...[he] will draw you in—and you'll learn something at the same time.”—*Rocky Mountain News*

“Thrilling...a good, cinematic story.”—*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

About the Author

Daniel Silva is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Unlikely Spy*, *The Mark of the Assassin*, *The Marching Season*, and the Gabriel Allon series, including *The Kill Artist*, *The English Assassin*, *The Confessor*, *A Death in Vienna*, *Prince of Fire*, *The Messenger*, *The Secret Servant*, *Moscow Rules*, *The Defector*, *The Rembrandt Affair*, *Portrait of a Spy*, *The Fallen Angel*, *The English Girl*, *The Heist*, *The English Spy*, and *The Black Widow*. His books are published in more than thirty countries and are bestsellers around the world.

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Switzerland 1975

Marguerite Rolfe was digging in her garden because of the secrets she'd found hidden in her husband's study. It was late to be working in the garden, well past midnight by now. The spring thaw had left the earth soft and moist, and her spade split the soil with little effort, allowing her to progress with minimal noise. For this she was grateful. Her husband and daughter were asleep in the villa, and she didn't want to wake them.

Why couldn't it have been something simple, like love letters from another woman? There would have been a good row, Marguerite would have confessed her own affair. Lovers would have been relinquished, and soon their home would return to normal. But she hadn't found love letters—she'd found something much worse.

For a moment she blamed herself. If she hadn't been searching his study, she never would have found the

photographs. She could have spent the rest of her life in blissful oblivion, believing her husband was the man he appeared to be. But now she knew. Her husband was a monster, his life a lie—a complete and meticulously maintained lie. Therefore she too was a lie.

Marguerite Rolfe concentrated on her work, making slow and steady progress. After an hour it was done. A good hole, she decided: about six feet in length and two feet across. Six inches below the surface she had encountered a dense layer of clay. As a result it was a bit shallower than she would have preferred. It didn't matter. She knew it wasn't permanent.

She picked up the gun. It was her husband's favorite weapon, a beautiful shotgun, hand-crafted for him by a master gunsmith in Milan. He would never be able to use it again. This pleased her. She thought of Anna. Please don't wake up, Anna. Sleep, my love.

Then she stepped into the ditch, lay down on her back, placed the end of the barrel in her mouth, pulled the trigger.

The girl was awakened by music. She did not recognize the piece and wondered how it had found its way into her head. It lingered a moment, a descending series of notes, a serene diminishment. She reached out, eyes still closed, and searched the folds of the bedding until her palm found the body which lay a few inches away. Her fingers slipped over the narrow waist, up the slender, elegant neck, toward the graceful curved features of the scroll. Last night they had quarreled. Now it was time to set aside their differences and make peace.

She eased from the bed, pulled on a dressing gown. Five hours of practice stretched before her. Thirteen years old, a sun-drenched June morning, and this was how she would spend her day—and every other day that summer.

Stretching the muscles of her neck, she gazed out the window at the flowering garden. It was a melee of spring color. Beyond the garden rose the steep slope of the valley wall. High above it all loomed the snow-capped mountain peaks, glittering in the bright summer sun. She pressed her violin to her neck and prepared to play the first *Étude*.

Then she noticed something in the garden: a mound of dirt, a long shallow hole. From her vantage point in the window she could see a swath of white fabric stretched across the bottom and pale hands wrapped around the barrel of a gun.

“Mama!” she screamed, and the violin crashed to the floor.

She threw open the door to her father's study without knocking. She had expected to find him at his desk, hunched over his ledgers, but instead he was perched on the edge of a high-backed wing chair, next to the fireplace. A tiny, elfin figure, he wore his habitual blue blazer and striped tie. He was not alone. The second man wore sunglasses in spite of the masculine gloom of the study.

“What on earth do you think you're doing?” snapped her father. “How many times have I asked you to respect my closed door? Can't you see I'm in the middle of an important discussion?”

“But Papa—”

“And put on some proper clothing! Ten o’clock in the morning and you’re still wearing only a housecoat.”

“Papa, I must—”

“It can wait until I’ve finished.”

“No, it can’t, Papa!”

She screamed this so loudly the man in sunglasses flinched.

“I apologize, Otto, but I’m afraid my daughter’s manners have suffered from spending too many hours alone with her instrument. Will you excuse me? I won’t be but a moment.”

Anna Rolfe’s father handled important documents with care, and the note he removed from the grave was no exception. When he finished reading it, he looked up sharply, his gaze flickering from side to side, as if he feared someone was reading over his shoulder. This Anna saw from her bedroom window.

As he turned and started back toward the villa, he glanced up at the window and his eyes met Anna’s. He paused, holding her gaze for a moment. It was not a gaze of sympathy. Or remorse. It was a gaze of suspicion.

She turned from the window. The Stradivarius lay where she had dropped it. She picked it up. Downstairs she heard her father calmly telling his guest of his wife’s suicide. She lifted the violin to her neck, laid the bow upon the strings, closed her eyes. G minor. Various patterns of ascent and descent. Arpeggios. Broken thirds.

“How can she play at a time like this?”

“I’m afraid she knows little else.”

Late afternoon. The two men alone in the study again. The police had completed their initial investigation, and the body had been removed. The note lay on the drop-leaf table between them.

“A doctor could give her a sedative.”

“She doesn’t want a doctor. I’m afraid she has her mother’s temper and her mother’s stubborn nature.”

“Did the police ask whether there was a note?”

“I see no need to involve the police in the personal matters of this family, especially when it concerns the suicide of my wife.”

“And your daughter?”

“What about my daughter?”

“She was watching you from the window.”

“My daughter is my business. I’ll deal with her as I see fit.”

“I certainly hope so. But do me one small favor.”

“What’s that, Otto?”

His pale hand patted the top of the table until it came to rest on the note.

“Burn this damned thing, along with everything else. Make sure no one else stumbles on any unpleasant reminders of the past. This is Switzerland. There is no past.”

The Present

1 London * Zurich

The sometimes-solvent firm of Isherwood Fine Arts had once occupied a piece of fine commercial property on stylish New Bond Street in Mayfair. Then came London’s retail renaissance, and New Bond Street—or New Bondstrasse, as it was derisively known in the trade—was overrun by the likes of Tiffany and Gucci and Versace and Mikimoto. Julian Isherwood and other dealers specializing in museum-quality Old Masters were driven into St. Jamesian exile—the Bond Street Diaspora, as Isherwood was fond of calling it. He eventually settled in a sagging Victorian warehouse in a quiet quadrangle known as Mason’s Yard, next to the London offices of a minor Greek shipping company and a pub that catered to pretty office girls who rode motor scooters.

Among the incestuous, backbiting villagers of St. James’s, Isherwood Fine Arts was considered rather good theater. Isherwood Fine Arts had drama and tension, comedy and tragedy, stunning highs and seemingly bottomless lows. This was, in large measure, a consequence of its owner’s personality. He was cursed with a near-fatal flaw for an art dealer: He liked to possess art more than to sell it. Each time a painting left the wall of his exquisite exposition room, Isherwood fell into a raging blue funk. As a result of this affliction he was now burdened by an apocalyptic inventory of what is affectionately known in the trade as dead stock—paintings for which no buyer would ever pay a fair price. Unsellable paintings. Burned, as they liked to say in Duke Street. Toast. If Isherwood had been asked to explain this seemingly inexplicable failure of business acumen, he might have raised the issue of his father, though he made a point of never—And I mean never, petal—talking about his father.

He was up now. Afloat. Flush with funds. A million pounds, to be precise, tucked nicely into his account at Barclays Bank, thanks to a Venetian painter named Francesco Vecellio and the morose-looking art restorer now making his way across the wet bricks of Mason’s Yard.

Isherwood pulled on a macintosh. His English scale and devoutly English wardrobe concealed the fact that he was not—at least not technically speaking—English at all. English by nationality and passport, yes, but German by birth, French by upbringing, and Jewish by religion. Few people knew that his last name was merely a phonetic perversion of its original. Fewer still knew that he’d done favors over the years for a certain bullet-headed gentleman from a certain clandestine agency based in Tel Aviv. Rudolf Heller was the name the gentleman used when calling on Isherwood at the gallery. It was a borrowed name, borrowed like the gentleman’s blue suit and gentleman’s manners. His real name was Ari Shamron.

“One makes choices in life, doesn’t one?” Shamron had said at the time of Isherwood’s recruitment. “One doesn’t betray one’s adopted country, one’s college, or one’s regiment, but one looks out for one’s flesh and blood, one’s tribe, lest another Austrian madman, or the Butcher of Baghdad, try to turn us all into soap again, eh, Julian?”

“Hear, hear, Herr Heller.”

“We won’t pay you a pound. Your name will never appear in our files. You’ll do favors for me from time to time. Very specific favors for a very special agent.”

“Super. Marvelous. Where do I sign up? What sort of favors? Nothing shady, I take it?”

“Say I need to send him to Prague. Or Oslo. Or Berlin, God forbid. I’d like you to find legitimate work for him there. A restoration. An authentication. A consultation. Something appropriate for the amount of time he’ll be staying.”

“Not a problem, Herr Heller. By the way, does this agent of yours have a name?”

The agent had many names, thought Isherwood now, watching the man make his way across the quadrangle. His real name was Gabriel Allon, and the nature of his secret work for Shamron was betrayed by subtle things he did now. The way he glanced over his shoulder as he slipped through the passageway from Duke Street. The way that, in spite of a steady rain, he made not one but two complete circuits of the old yard before approaching the gallery’s secure door and ringing Isherwood’s bell. Poor Gabriel. One of the three or four best in the world at what he does, but he can’t walk a straight line. And why not? After what happened to his wife and child in Vienna . . . no man would be the same after that.

He was unexpectedly average in height, and his smooth gait seemed to propel him effortlessly across Duke Street to Green’s Restaurant, where Isherwood had booked a table for lunch. As they sat down, Gabriel’s eyes flickered about the room like searchlights. They were almond-shaped, unnaturally green, and very quick. The cheekbones were broad and square, the lips dark, and the sharp-edged nose looked as though it had been carved from wood. It was a timeless face, thought Isherwood. It could be a face on the cover of a glossy men’s fashion magazine or a face from a dour Rembrandt portrait. It was also a face of many possible origins. It had been a superb professional asset.

Isherwood ordered stuffed sole and Sancerre, Gabriel black tea and a bowl of consommÈ. He reminded Isherwood of an Orthodox hermit who subsisted on rancid feta and concrete flatbread, only Gabriel lived in a pleasant cottage on a remote tidal creek in Cornwall instead of a monastery. Isherwood had never seen him eat a rich meal, had never seen him smile or admire an attractive pair of hips. He never lusted after material objects. He had only two toys, an old MG motorcar and a wooden ketch, both of which he had restored himself. He listened to his opera on a dreadful little portable CD player stained with paint and varnish. He spent money only on his supplies. He had more high-tech toys in his little Cornish studio than there were in the conservation department of the Tate.

How little Gabriel had changed in the twenty-five years since they had first met. A few more wrinkles around those watchful eyes, a few more pounds on his spare frame. He’d been little more than a boy that day, quiet as a church mouse. Even then, his hair was streaked with gray, the stain of a boy who’d done a man’s job. “Julian Isherwood, meet Gabriel,” Shamron had said. “Gabriel is a man of enormous talent, I assure you.”

Enormous talent, indeed, but there had been gaps in the young man’s provenance—like the missing three years between his graduation from the prestigious Betsal’el School of Art in Jerusalem and his apprenticeship in Venice with the master restorer Umberto Conti. “Gabriel spent time traveling in Europe,” Shamron had said curtly. That was the last time the subject of Gabriel’s European adventures was ever raised. Julian Isherwood didn’t talk about what had happened to his father, and Gabriel didn’t talk about the things he had done for Ari Shamron, alias Rudolf Heller, from approximately 1972 to 1975. Secretly, Isherwood referred to them as the Lost Years.

Isherwood reached into the breast pocket of his jacket and withdrew a check. “Your share from the sale of

the Vecellio. One hundred thousand pounds.”

Gabriel scooped up the check and pocketed it with a smooth movement of his hand. He had magician’s hands and a magician’s sense of misdirection. The check was there, the check was gone.

“How much was your share?”

“I’ll tell you, but you must first promise me that you won’t divulge the figure to any of these vultures,” Isherwood said, sweeping his hand across the dining room of Green’s.

Gabriel said nothing, which Isherwood interpreted as a blood oath of everlasting silence.

“One million.”

“Dollars?”

“Pounds, petal. Pounds.”

“Who bought it?”

“A very nice gallery in the American Midwest. Tastefully displayed, I assure you. Can you imagine? I picked it up for sixteen thousand from a dusty sale room in Hull on the hunch—the wild bloody hunch—that it was the missing altarpiece from the church of San Salvatore in Venice. And I was right! A coup like this comes along once in a career, twice if you’re lucky. Cheers.”

They toasted each other, stemmed wineglass to bone-china teacup. Just then a tubby man with a pink shirt and pink cheeks to match presented himself breathlessly at their table.

“Julie!” he sang.

“Hullo, Oliver.”

“Word on Duke Street is you picked up a cool million for your Vecellio.”

“Where the bloody hell did you hear that?”

“There are no secrets down here, love. Just tell me if it’s the truth or a dirty, seditious lie.” He turned to Gabriel, as if noticing him for the first time, and thrust out a fleshy paw with a gold-embossed business card wedged between the thick fingers. “Oliver Dimbleby. Dimbleby Fine Arts.”

Gabriel took the card silently.

“Why don’t you join us for a drink, Oliver?” said Isherwood.

Beneath the table Gabriel put his foot on Isherwood’s toe and pressed hard.

“Can’t now, love. That leggy creature in the booth over there has promised to whisper filth into my ear if I buy her another glass of champagne.”

“Thank God!” blurted Isherwood through clenched teeth.

Oliver Dimbleby waddled off. Gabriel released the pressure on Isherwood’s foot.

“So much for your secrets.”

“Vultures,” Isherwood repeated. “I’m up now, but the moment I stumble they’ll be hovering again, waiting for me to die so they can pick over the bones.”

“Maybe this time you should watch your money a little more carefully.”

“I’m afraid I’m a hopeless case. In fact—”

“Oh, God.”

“—I’m traveling to Amsterdam to have a look at a painting next week. It’s the centerpiece of a triptych, classified as artist unknown, but I have another one of my hunches. I think it may have come from the workshop of Rogier van der Weyden. In fact, I may be willing to bet a great deal of money on it.”

“Van der Weydens are notoriously difficult to authenticate. There are only a handful of works firmly attributed to him, and he never signed or dated any of them.”

“If it came from his workshop, his fingerprints will be on it. And if there’s anyone who can find them, it’s you.”

“I’ll be happy to take a look at it for you.”

“Are you working on anything now?”

“I just finished a Modigliani.”

“I have a job for you.”

“What kind of job?”

“I received a call from a lawyer a few days ago. Said his client has a painting that requires cleaning. Said his client wanted you to handle the job and would pay handsomely.”

“What’s the client’s name?”

“Didn’t say.”

“What’s the painting?”

“Didn’t say.”

“So how is it supposed to work?”

“You go to the villa, you work on the painting. The owner pays for your hotel and expenses.”

“Where?”

“Zurich.”

Something flashed behind Gabriel’s green eyes, a vision, a memory. Isherwood frantically rifled through the file drawers of his own less reliable memory. Have I ever sent him to Zurich for Herr Heller?

“Is Zurich a problem?”

“No, Zurich is fine. How much would I be paid?”

“Twice what I’ve just given you—if you start right away.”

“Give me the address.”

Gabriel did not have time to return to Cornwall to pick up his things, so after lunch he went shopping. In Oxford Street he purchased two changes of clothing and a small leather bag. Then he walked over to Great Russell Street and visited the venerable art-supply store of L. Cornelissen & Son. A flaxen-haired angel called Penelope helped him assemble a traveling kit of pigments, brushes, and solvents. She knew him by his work name, and he flirted with her shamelessly in the faded accent of an Italian expatriate. She wrapped his things in brown paper and bound them with a string. He kissed her cheek. Her hair smelled of cocoa and incense.

Gabriel knew too much about terrorism and security to enjoy traveling by airplane, so he rode the Underground to Waterloo Station and caught a late-afternoon Eurostar to Paris. In the Gare de l’Est he boarded a night train for Zurich, and by nine o’clock the next morning he was strolling down the gentle sweep of the Bahnhofstrasse.

How gracefully Zurich conceals her riches, he thought. Much of the world’s gold and silver lay in the bank vaults beneath his feet, but there were no hideous office towers to mark the boundaries of the financial district and no monuments to moneymaking. Just understatement, discretion, and deception. A scorned woman who looks away to hide her shame. Switzerland.

He came upon the Paradeplatz. On one side of the square stood the headquarters of Credit Suisse, on the other the Union Bank of Switzerland. A burst of pigeons shattered the calm. He crossed the street.

Opposite the Savoy hotel was a taxi stand. He climbed into a waiting car after first glancing at the registration number and committing it to memory. He gave the driver the address of the villa, doing his best to conceal the Berlin accent he had acquired from his mother.

Crossing the river, the driver switched on the radio. An announcer was reading the overnight news. Gabriel struggled to comprehend his Z, rid, tsch. He tuned out the radio and focused on the task ahead. There were some in the art world who thought of restoration as tedious work, but Gabriel viewed each assignment as an adventure waiting to unfold; an opportunity to step through a looking glass into another time and place. A place where success or failure was determined by his own skills and nerve and nothing else.

He wondered what awaited him. The very fact that the owner had specifically requested him meant that the work was almost certainly an Old Master. He could also assume that the painting was quite dirty and damaged. The owner wouldn’t have gone to the trouble and expense of bringing him to Zurich if it required only a fresh coat of varnish.

So how long would he be here? Six weeks? Six months? Difficult to say. No two restorations were the same; much would depend on the condition of the painting. Isherwood’s Vecellio had required a year to restore, though he had taken a brief sabbatical in the middle of the job, courtesy of Ari Shamron.

The Rosenbühlweg was a narrow street, just wide enough to accommodate two cars at once, and it rose sharply up the slope of the Zürichberg. The villas were old and big and huddled closely together. Stucco walls, tile roofs, small tangled gardens. All except the one where the taxi driver pulled to a stop.

It stood atop its own promontory and unlike its neighbors was set several meters back from the street. A high metal fence, like the bars of a jail cell, ran round the perimeter. At the level of the pavement there was a security gate, complete with a small surveillance camera. Beyond the gate rose a flight of stone steps. Then came the villa, a melancholy graystone structure with turrets and a towering front portico.

The taxi drove off. Below lay central Zurich and the lake. Cloud veiled the far shore. Gabriel remembered that it was possible to see the Alps on a clear day, but now they too were shrouded.

Mounted next to the gate on a stone wall was a telephone. Gabriel picked up the receiver, heard ringing at the other end of the line, waited. Nothing. He replaced the receiver, picked it up again. Still no answer.

He pulled out the lawyer's fax that Julian Isherwood had given him in London. You are to arrive at precisely 9 a.m. Ring the bell and you'll be escorted inside. Gabriel looked at his watch. Three minutes after nine.

As he slipped the papers back into his pocket it began to rain. He looked around: no cafés where he might sit in comfort, no parks or squares where he might find some shelter from the weather. Just a desert of inherited residential wealth. If he stood on the pavement too long, he'd probably be arrested for loitering.

He pulled out his mobile phone and dialed Isherwood's number. He was probably still on his way to the gallery. As Gabriel waited for the connection to go through, he had a mental image of Isherwood, hunched over the wheel of his shining new Jaguar motorcar, crawling along Piccadilly as if he were piloting an oil tanker through treacherous waters.

"Sorry, but I'm afraid there's been a change in plan. The fellow who was supposed to meet you was apparently called out of town suddenly. An emergency of some sort. He was vague about it. You know how the Swiss can be, petal."

"What am I supposed to do?"

"He sent me the security codes for the gate and the front door. You're to let yourself in. There's supposed to be a note for you on the table in the entrance hall explaining where you can find the painting and your accommodations."

"Rather unorthodox, don't you think?"

"Consider yourself fortunate. It sounds as if you're going to have the run of the place for a few days, and you won't have anyone watching over your shoulder while you work."

"I suppose you're right."

"Let me give you the security codes. Do you have paper and pen by any chance? They're rather long."

"Just tell me the numbers, Julian. It's pouring rain, and I'm getting soaked out here."

"Ah, yes. You and your little parlor tricks. I used to have a girl at the gallery who could do the same thing."

Isherwood rattled off two series of numbers, each eight digits in length, and severed the connection. Gabriel lifted the receiver of the security phone and punched in the numbers. A buzzer sounded; he turned the latch

and stepped through the gate. At the front entrance of the house he repeated the routine, and a moment later he was standing in the darkened front hall, groping for a light switch.

The envelope lay in a large glass bowl on a carved antique table at the foot of the staircase. It was addressed to Signore Delvecchio, Gabriel's work name. He picked up the envelope and sliced it open with his forefinger. Plain dove-gray paper, heavy bond, no letterhead. Precise careful handwriting, unsigned. He lifted it to his nose. No scent.

Gabriel began to read. The painting hung in the drawing room, a Raphael, *Portrait of a Young Man*. A reservation had been made for him at the Dolder Grand Hotel, about a mile away on the other side of the Zürichberg. There was food in the refrigerator. The owner would return to Zurich the following day. He would appreciate it greatly if Signore Delvecchio could begin work without delay.

Gabriel slipped the note into his pocket. So, a Raphael. It would be his second. Five years ago he had restored a small devotional piece, a *Madonna and Child*, based on the renowned composition of Leonardo. Gabriel could feel a tingling sensation spreading over the tips of his fingers. It was a marvelous opportunity. He was glad he had taken the job, regardless of the unorthodox arrangements.

He stepped through a passageway into a large room. It was dark, no lights burning, the heavy curtains tightly drawn. Despite the gloom he had the sensation of Middle European aristocratic clutter.

He took a few steps forward. Beneath his feet the carpet was damp. The air tasted of salt and rust. It was an odor Gabriel had smelled before. He reached down, touched his fingers to the carpet, and brought them to his face.

He was standing in blood.

The Oriental carpet was faded and very old, and so was the dead man sprawled in the center of it. He lay face-down, and in death he was reaching forward with his right hand. He wore a double-vented blue blazer, shiny with wear in the back, and gray flannel trousers. His shoes were brown suede. One shoe, the right, had a thickened heel and sole. The trousers had ridden up along his lower leg. The skin was shockingly white, like exposed bone. The socks were mismatched.

Gabriel squatted on his haunches with the casualness of someone who was at ease around the dead. The corpse had been a tiny man; five feet in height, no more. He lay in profile, the left side of the face exposed. Through the blood, Gabriel could see a square jaw and a delicate cheekbone. The hair was thick and snowy white. It appeared that the man had been shot once, through the left eye, and that the slug had exited the back of the skull. Judging from the size of the exit wound, the weapon was a rather large-caliber handgun. Gabriel looked up and saw that the slug had shattered the mirror above the large fireplace. He suspected the old man had been dead a few hours.

He supposed he should telephone the police, but then he imagined the situation from their point of view. A foreigner in an expensive home, a corpse shot through the eye. At the very least, he would be detained for questioning. Gabriel couldn't allow that to happen.

He rose and turned his gaze from the dead man to the Raphael. A striking image: a beautiful young man in semi-profile, sensuously lit. Gabriel guessed it had been painted while Raphael was living and working in Florence, probably between 1504 and 1508. Too bad about the old man; it would have been a pleasure to restore such a painting.

He walked back to the entrance hall, stopped and looked down. He had tracked blood across the marble floor. There was nothing to be done about it. In circumstances like these he had been trained to leave quickly without worrying about making a bit of a mess or noise.

He collected his cases, opened the door, and stepped outside. It was raining harder now, and by the time he reached the gate at the end of the flagstone walk he was no longer leaving bloody footprints.

He walked quickly until he came to a thoroughfare: the Kr”hb, hlstrasse. The Number 6 tram slithered down the slope of the hill. He raced it to the next stop, walking quickly but not running, and hopped on without a ticket.

The streetcar jerked forward. Gabriel sat down and looked to his right. Scrawled on the carriage wall, in black indelible marker, was a swastika superimposed over a Star of David. Beneath it were two words: Juden Scheiss.

The tram took him directly to Hauptbahnhof. Inside the terminal, in an underground shopping arcade, he purchased an exorbitantly priced pair of Bally leather boots. Upstairs in the main hall he checked the departure board. A train was leaving for Munich in fifteen minutes. From Munich he could make an evening flight back to London, where he would go directly to Isherwood’s house in South Kensington and strangle him.

He purchased a first-class ticket and walked to the toilet. In a stall he changed from his loafers into the new boots. On the way out he dropped the loafers into a rubbish bin and covered them with paper towels.

By the time he reached the platform, the train was boarding. He stepped onto the second carriage and picked his way along the corridor until he came to his compartment. It was empty. A moment later, as the train eased forward, Gabriel closed his eyes, but all he could see was the dead man lying at the foot of the Raphael, and the two words scrawled on a streetcar: juden scheiss.

The train slowed to a stop. They were still on the platform. Outside, in the corridor, Gabriel heard footfalls. Then the door to his compartment flew back as though blown open by a bomb, and two police officers burst inside.

Users Review

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