

CLICK THE BACK BUTTON TO RETURN TO *INSIDE SATAN'S LAIR*

INSIDE SATAN'S LAIR: THE UNLIKELY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DR. FELIX  
KERSTEN AND DREADED REICHSFUHRER HEINRICH HIMMLER OF THE SS

A DocuNovel by Lauren Steinhauer

“I have more faith in Hitler than in anyone else.

He alone has kept his promises, all his promises, to the Jewish people.”

—Elie Wiesel, *Night: NAZI Hunter*



## Chapter 1

Friday, March 10, 1939, 08.00 hours.

Felix Kersten, tall, stout, bear-like, well-dressed, destined to become the savior of well over 60,000 Holocaust survivors, stood at the base of the stairs that led to SS Headquarters in Berlin. His hands were ice cold to the touch. His heart beat hard, he felt queasy. He checked his watch; he did not want to be late for his appointment with Heinrich Himmler, Reichsleiter, Minister of the Interior, Chief of the German Police, Reichsführer of the SS, Member of the Cabinet and callous murderer of millions of victims.

Kersten is the man who ministered to heads of industry and heads of state and royalty in Finland, Holland and even in Berlin. In fact, he began his specialized training in Berlin with Dr. Kollander, learning physio-neural therapy, the application of radical massage to heal the patient. In 1922, Kersten met Dr. Ko, a Chinese doctor, who was a master of this treatment. Dr. Ko, a devotee of horoscopes, had graphed one reading revealing an exceptional man would come into his life; Dr. Ko understood this to mean Felix Kersten. Kersten and Dr. Ko came to travel to Tibet to further Kersten's education.

“Remember, I can teach you the mechanics of my methods,” said Dr. Ko, “but it is both a science and an art. You have the gift of healing with my methods; that is obvious to me. It is a talent one has or has not, like a singer, artist or actor.

“I will teach you my methods, methods as old as time,” said Dr. Ko. “Last week we talked about meridians, the flow of Qi or life energy throughout the body and the concept of Yin and Yang, the harmony of opposites. We learned that the conditions we may treat include acute and

chronic pain, rheumatoid and osteoarthritis, muscle and nerve difficulties, depression, smoking and eating disorders, drug ‘behavior problems,’ migraine, acne, ulcers, cancer, and constipation and many others.

“Qi cannot be destroyed or created. Redistributing Qi involves a deep understanding of the body, this method of mine. You will learn how to manipulate Qi by massaging the vital organs, the lymphatic channels and distribute the blood in such a way the massage heals the patient. Even effecting a cure for impotence by treating the glands of the throat.

“Today, you will learn how to adjust the twelve standard meridians, such as the Yin meridians of the lung, heart, and pericardium, the Yang meridians of the large intestine and small intestine, the Yin meridians of the spleen, kidney, and liver and the Yang meridians of the stomach, bladder, and gall bladder.”

“Yes, Dr. Ko, I understand,” said Kersten, sitting cross-legged in the doctor’s comfortable tent, the wind whistling outside.

“Very good,” Dr. Ko said. “This week, I shall practice on you first, and then you shall practice on me. Please, remove your shirt.”

Kersten stripped to the waist and lied down on his back. Dr. Ko bent over, placed his hands just below Kersten’s navel and began massaging his abdomen, pressing upward and downward in a rhythmic symphony of movement.

“Feel the muscles underneath. Stroke the organs gently but firmly.”

The session lasted nearly an hour.

“Very well,” said Dr. Ko, “how do you feel?”

“Rejuvenated, Dr. Ko,” Kersten replied with a smile, stretching his arms.

“Good, now it’s your turn.”

Kersten began his massage.

“Take your time,” Dr. Ko said. “Press a little deeper. Yes, that’s it. Now, move to the organs. Imagine them. Treat them with a flutter, gently. Gently. Yes, you’re doing well.”

One day in 1925, back in Berlin, Dr. Ko prepared his weekly horoscope. With Mars and Saturn forming a tight conjunction in his sign, Dr. Ko set the stage for a final chapter. Jupiter and Uranus retrograde were squaring Pluto retrograde, alerting him to imminent death! Immediately, he settled his estate and passed his practice in Berlin onto Kersten. Shortly after, Dr. Ko passed away.

Kersten rose the fifteen steps to the massive doors flanked by two guards of SS Headquarters and ushered himself through the entrance. He walked up to the guard seated before a solid oak desk adjacent to a black marble stairway.

“Guten morgen” Kersten said.“

“What is your business?” curtly asked the guard.

“I have an appointment with Reichsführer Himmler.”

“And your name?”

“Felix Kersten, Dr. Kersten”.

“ One moment,” said the guard.

He picked up a green telephone to the left of the desk, cranked the phone to life and pressed a bronze button on the intercom.

“Reichsführer, I have a gentleman claiming to have an appointment with you. Yes, yes. I see. Very good, Reichsführer,“ the guard said. “Gerhard!” he barked.

A tall SS man, blond, blue-eyed, appeared by the desk, clicked his heels and said, "Yes, sir."

"Escort Herr Kersten to Reichsführer Himmler's office."

"Yes," the guard said, clicking his heels, again. "Follow me."

Kersten followed the black clad guard up the stairs and to the left of the corridor, as Kersten heard the footfalls echo. "Excuse me, but may I visit the bathroom first?"

"If you must. Follow me, Doktor Kersten. Two doors to the left."

Kersten followed the guard and entered the bathroom while the guard stood at attention just outside the door.

Kersten moved to a basin, turned on the hot water and ran his hands underneath to warm them. He dried them and left the room. He slipped his right hand into the coat pocket and clutched a kerchief there. "Very well," he said. Kersten followed the guard who knocked twice at the door to Himmler's office. The doorknob revolved and the door opened, revealing another German officer.

"Herr Doktor," the officer said. "I am Reichsführer Himmler's adjutant, Rudolf Brandt. Welcome. Please, wait here. Reichsführer Himmler will be here presently." He clicked his heels and left the room, closing the door.

The office was impressively large, all marble and gilt. To the left of the neatly appointed desk was a bust of Adolf Hitler. The walls were lined with books. Kersten looked them over: The ubiquitous Mein Kampf, several books on history along with Nazi propaganda and many volumes about religion, especially about the Muslim religion, biographies about Mohammed and the like. One subject stood out, though, books about Henry Fowler, the Saxon duke who became Germany's first king along with volumes about the violent, bloodthirsty mogul, Genghis Khan, and other military leaders.

“Ah, Herr Kersten?” questioned Himmler, standing by the door. His right arm snapped to the Nazi salute.

Kersten nodded, slipped his right hand from the coat pocket and offered his hand. “Yes, my name is Felix Kersten.”

Kersten stepped forward and took Himmler’s hand; Himmler’s handshake felt limp and clammy.

Kersten pointed to a portrait hanging to the right of the desk. “I see, Reichsführer, you are a student of history.”

“A student of myself,” was Himmler’s quizzical reply, pointing to a book on the shelf.

“Germany’s first king in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. I am well acquainted with him. I am him! Or was, in a former life. Please sit down, Herr Kersten.” Himmler looked pale, ill and in pain. He looked small and insignificant; something repulsive about him struck Kersten, with his thin moustache, his weak chin, his owl-like round glasses. He was the last person Kersten would have imagined to be the most powerful member of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reich other than Hitler. “Let me come straight to the point, Professor—”

“Pardon me, but I am not a professor,” said Kersten, “I am merely a doctor.”

“Very well, Herr Doktor. If I seem distracted, it’s probably because I was given a shot shortly before your arrival.”

“A pain killer, I assume.”

“You noticed something.”

“A slurring of the speech.”

“Ah,” said Himmler, “but the pain was most intense.”

“Do you have many of these injections?” inquired Kersten.

“No, not every day.”

“Such drugs can become toxic after a while. Perhaps I can prevent that with my treatments.”

“Herr Doktor, I have been suffering from severe stomach cramps throughout the day for a long, long time. So severe they make me double up in pain and have caused me to miss my obligations and even to the point of changing my appointments. Even with my Führer, which has been very embarrassing. All day, this time,” Himmler added.

“Hmm,” Kersten reacted. “If the pain has been going on for so long, the cause is probably not appendicitis. Have you had anything to eat today?”

“Some fish.”

“Ah, this particular attack could be from ptomaine poisoning. As to childhood diseases, what can you tell me about this?”

Himmler thought for a moment. “I remember contracting typhoid fever when I was very young.”

“Ah, this bout of the disease could have weakened the nerves. From that time on, you suffered from chronic stomach pain?”

“No,” Himmler replied, “these flair ups started a few years ago.”

“Hmm,” this is significant,” Kersten noted.

“Is it? How so?”

“The chronology suggests that your involvement with the Nazi party has something to do with your symptoms,” replied Kersten.

“Ah, you see? Already we are making headway. Your reputation precedes you.”

“I have had some success,” said Kersten.

“You are too modest, Herr Doktor,” After an awkward pause, Himmler asked, “Can you help me?”



“Reichsführer Himmler, frankly I do not know,” Kersten admitted. “I shall need to give you some treatments and see how things stand.” Kersten cleared his throat and continued. “I will need to conduct many treatments before I can accept you as a patient.”

“Many treatments? Does it take so long?”

“Yes, I must be sure I can help you with my massage,” said Kersten. “A few ailments do not respond well to my methods.”

“Very well,” replied Himmler, sounding slighted.

“One other point. I shall make one concession to you. You are an important man with many obligations. I shall come here to your office to conduct my treatments. Ordinarily, my patients come to me at my apartment here in Berlin. And I shall need a space to conduct the treatments.”

“Very good, Herr Kersten,” said Himmler enthusiastically. “Let me show you,” Himmler said. He moved to a side door and gestured Kersten to follow.

“My bedroom.” More marble and gilt, baroque decoration everywhere. Kersten noticed a book turned facedown on a side table, a copy of the Koran.

Tapping the back of the book, Himmler said, “I take it wherever I go.” With a sweeping gesture, he asked of Kersten, “Is this chamber suitable?”

“Yes, this will do very well, Reichsführer Himmler. I shall need a massage table.”

“Yes, of course. When may we start?”

“I have commitments today, but we may start tomorrow,” replied Kersten. “Would that be favorable for you?”

“Yes, Herr Doktor. Anything.”

“Shall we say, 10 o’clock?”

“Yes, very well.”

Himmler picked up a phone and uttered, “Gerhard, allow Dr. Kersten to leave.” To Kersten.  
“Thank you and goodbye.”

The men shook hands, and Kersten left Himmler’s office. How many men, Kersten thought, have entered this building never to be heard of since. The hairs on the back of his head bristled with this thought as he departed and descended the outside steps.

## Chapter 2

Kersten arrived home in Gut Hartzwalde, his estate about 80 kilometers from Berlin. He entered the hallway and called to his wife, Irmgard. She appeared by the study entrance and quickly approached Kersten. They kissed warmly and hugged.

“Now, how did it go, dear?”

“Well, I think, as far as it goes.”

“You sound unsure,” said Irmgard.

“No. And Himmler doesn’t seem all that bad. The stories about him, I’m sure, are exaggerated. He was very polite to me. He seemed almost inconsequential. But I swear, Irmgard,” Kersten disclosed, “sitting there in the headquarters of the SS, I could hear something in the distance, someone, a muffled crying out. Yes, Himmler is head of the SS. And the Gestapo. What if my methods don’t succeed? All of us could be in serious danger. And how could I turn down his request? A request from Himmler is an order, not a request, even for a civilian.”

Heinrich Himmler tapped his pencil sharply on the oblong table several times and noted the time. 11.00 hours. The cramped map room was stuffy and hazy blue with cigarette smoke.

“Gentlemen, order. Order!”

A general rose from his chair. “Reichsführer Himmler,” he said as the group quieted down. “I believe the Jewish question is our top priority. Since the beginning of National Socialism, we have stressed the urgency of taking care of this problem. The Nuremberg laws were a start, not an end. The children of these Jews may grow up to rise up and endanger us, to endanger our military stance. They will become the resistance of the future.”

Another general entered the discussion. "I say that this can best be handled by relocation. According to our research, the island of Madagascar," he said, pointing to a spot on the map, a large island, "would be a suitable location for such a solution."

Himmler gestured with his hands to stop the chatter as he shook his head.

"Nein, nein. Even America's Andrew Jackson proposed such an action to solve the negro problem. A study of mine conducted in November," said Himmler, shuffling through a stack of documents, "concluded Madagascar was not a suitable answer to this dilemma." Himmler threw the folder carelessly on the map draping the table. "Especially since France governs the island. There would be political repercussions. I think, though, we all agree something must be done. For the sake of our nation. For the sake of our women. Something must be done. The Führer is waiting!"

"Perhaps a general edict" said General Yodl, "calling for emigrations and evacuations of Jews best handles the problem. Then we can funnel them as quickly as possible to those states willing and stupid enough to take them."

"Yes..." remarked Himmler, "your suggestion strikes me as reasonable. It seems like an answer the Führer might approve of. Of course, the question is, would anyone be willing to take on this rabble?"

"So, does anyone disagree with General Yodl?"

The group mumbled to each other, then quieted down. "Of course, there is one more solution. A final solution." A moment of silence. "Very good, if there is no more to discuss at this time, I call this meeting adjourned. We will take up the issue, again, at our next meeting."

The group of high-ranking officers of the General Staff disbanded and left the room, leaving Himmler alone in the map room. Suddenly, he doubled up in pain. He waited a moment till the

pain subsided, then bent over the map showing the whole of Europe. He spread his fingers, touched the map in its center, then spread his hands to the edges of the map with a self-satisfied smile. Tomorrow, the world is ours, he thought.

Early morning.

The phone rang. Kersten rubbed his eyes and checked the time. 3 o'clock. With the third ring, he picked up the receiver.

"Yes?" he questioned dully.

"Doctor Kersten, this is Rudolf Brandt, Reichsführer Himmler's assistant. Sorry to wake you so early, but he requests your presence as soon as possible. He is in great pain."

"Yes, I'll leave immediately. I should arrive within the hour."

"Reichsführer Himmler will be most pleased." And he hung up.

Irmgard turned round in bed as Kersten slipped into his slippers.

"And so it begins," Irmgard said with a sigh.

"Yes," Kersten agreed. "Now it begins."

Kersten dressed while Irmgard slipped into a nightgown.

They walked downstairs, and Kersten kissed Irmgard on the forehead.

"Go back to sleep, now," he said.

"I'll try, dear."

One more kiss at the door and Kersten traversed the pavement to the car.

Kersten walked up the stairs to SS headquarters. There was no moon; the night sky was pitch black, and all but a handful of windows were alight, streaming yellow. One of the guards

standing just outside the door snapped to attention with the Nazi salute. Perplexed at the absence of reciprocity, the guard questioned, “Dr. Kersten?”

“Yes, Reichsführer Himmler is expecting me.”

“Follow me.”

They walked up to Himmler’s office where the guard knocked twice.

“Yes, come in!” Himmler said excitedly.

“Herr Doktor,” announced the guard with a click of the heels.

“Very well, return to your post,” ordered Himmler.

The guard left, and Kersten approached Himmler, hunched over his chair and doubled up in pain.

“I’ve been like this since midnight, Herr Kersten.”

You were alright till then?” questioned Kersten.

“It was tolerable, which to date has been the norm for me since I can remember. The doctors”—his voice rose to a high pitch—“all they want is to give me pills, worthless pills. And injections!”

Kersten moved to Himmler’s side and offered his arm. Himmler grasped Kersten’s arm and slowly lifted himself off the chair. They took short steps and entered the bedroom.

Still holding onto Kersten’s arm, Himmler placed himself on the edge of the bed, then swung his body onto the center of the mattress. “God,” he declared, wincing.

“Try,” instructed Kersten, “lying completely down and relaxing. Slowly, slowly.”

Himmler grimaced as he lowered himself on the bed.

“Very well. Now we must raise your shirt so I can access your abdomen.”

“Yes, of course” declared Himmler, removing his tie and unbuttoning his shirt and loosening his belt. With a wince he lowered his pants to just above his groin.

“Now, I must warn you, Reichsführer, at first my massage may be painful. But by the end of the session, the pain should have subsided. If my attempts are successful.”

“I understand, Herr Doktor. Please,” said Himmler with some effort, “begin.”

“Very well,” replied Kersten, stooping over Himmler’s body.

Kersten placed his hands on Himmler’s abdomen and firmly pressed. With sweeping moves, he massaged Himmler. Pressing and squeezing. Stretching and kneading. Kersten manipulated muscle, lymph channel and blood vessel with precision.

A half hour passed. Himmler winced with each move of Kersten’s until suddenly the pain magically vanished. A dull feeling of bruising persisted, but the sharp pangs of pain had disappeared.

“Herr Kersten,” said Himmler, in his high-pitched voice, “you are a miracle worker! The pain is gone. The horrible, gripping pain is gone.” He grasped Kersten’s arm and sat up. “I feel something. But it’s not pain.”

“That feeling is not uncommon,” said Kersten. “With more treatments, that feeling will disappear. But,” Kersten stressed, “I cannot yet say I can help you in the long term. I still need to apply more treatments and see what happens.”

“But I feel better, so much better!” declared Himmler.

“Do you understand the term, placebo?”

“Yes, I believe so. A sugar pill or something. To test the worthiness of an experiment.”

“Precisely, Reichsführer. But this may apply to what I have just done, as well,” explained Kersten. “My massage may be like a placebo, a trick of the mind temporarily allaying your symptoms. A psychological explanation of what you are feeling. Or not feeling. So, Reichsführer,” Kersten asked, “shall we have more treatments?”

“By all means! I must have more treatments,” declared Himmler. “You are my magic Buddha.”

Clutching Kersten’s arm, Himmler rose off the bed and stood up straight.

“No pain, none,” said Himmler, almost more to himself than to Kersten. “I shall make you a member of the Nazi party! An officer in the SS for your service!”

“No, Reichsführer,” said Kersten forcefully. “I appreciate the gesture, but I do not want to join any group.”

“But the SS is the corps d’élite.”

“I am not political. I am a doctor, that is all. I do not want to join the party or the SS. So, shall we say Monday in the morning? suggested Kersten. “Ten a.m.”.

“Anytime,” uttered Himmler. “Anything you need. Just let me know.”

It was past five in the morning when the men parted company. Kersten forced himself to stay awake as he drove home, thinking to himself, I shall not be able to cure Himmler, but I think I can alley his pain from treatment to treatment. By five-thirty, he was parking the car and moving to the front door. Inside, everything was dark and silent. His tabby cat meowed and crossed past Kersten’s shadow.

9 a.m. came quickly. Kersten pulled the blanket over his head and moaned. Irmgard rose and tiptoed out the bedroom. Irmgard and the housekeeper, Frida, met half way by the stairs.

“See to breakfast, would you?” Irmgard requested.

“Yes, m’am,” Frida replied and tripped down the stairs.

The family met at the dining table. Arno and his two brothers slipped into chairs. Kersten rubbed his eyes and tried to shake the morning fog from his head while he sat down.

Frida brought forth breakfast: a deli platter and a continental breakfast. Cold meats including their famous sausages and cheeses served along side a variety of breads, marmalade and honey.



Soft-boiled eggs, cereal and fruit rounded out the large meal. Frida stood aside, waiting for requests.

Irmgard spoke, passing eggs. "Dear, I've been hearing some disturbing things about your new client, Himmler."

"Yes?"

"He is head of the SS, no?"

"That's what I understand."

"Isn't the SS Hitler's bodyguard, father?" asked Arno, as he reached for hard-boiled eggs onto his plate.

"He is also head of the Gestapo," explained Kersten. "Don't forget that."

"Doesn't that concern you?" Irmgard asked.

"Of course," Kersten replied, "it does, but he seems to be very enthusiastic about my services. As the Americans say, that's our ace in the hole." He poured black coffee into his cup.

"He's a very powerful man, second only to Hitler, I hear. If you fail," Irmgard said, "that could be very dangerous, dear. For all of us."

"Himmler's request is an order, not a request, Irmgard. It would be even more dangerous to turn him away."

"Please," as she sipped coffee, "be careful, dear."

"You may be relieved to know I am going to visit the Finnish consulate today and see if I can extricate myself from this mess. I do share your concerns. But now, I must dress."

Kersten entered the Finnish consulate, all wood paneling and marbled tiles. He moved to the reception area.

“Hello,” he said to the man behind the desk. “I’m here to see Ambassador Kivimaeki.” Kersten handed over his papers. The man behind the desk said, “I see you are a Finnish citizen. Very good. Please be seated,” handing back Kersten’s papers.

Five minutes later, someone called out Kersten’s name. A door was opened, and Kersten was ushered into a brightly lit room. Ambassador Kivimaeki rose from his chair and offered his hand. Kersten moved to the desk and shook a warm hand.

“Please be seated,” Kivimaeki said. He tapped a pen on the desktop. “How may we help you?” My name is Felix Kersten, and I am a Finnish citizen. I am a doctor with a practice in both Finland, Holland and here in Berlin.

“I see,” said Kivimaeki. “Do you specialize in something, Doktor?”

“Yes, I am a physiotherapist.”

“Physiotherapist? I am not —“

“I cure my patients with massage,” explained Kersten, “which partly explains why I am here today.”

“Please continue.”

“One of my clients is Heinrich Himmler.”

Kivimaeki sucked in air and dropped his pen.

“Himmler—“

“Yes, Reichsführer Himmler. How I came to enlist him as one of my patients is a long story. Rather, he enlisted me! As you might imagine, a call from Reichsführer Himmler is not a simple request. Suffice it to say that Dr. Diehn, President of the German Potassium Syndicate, a patient of mine, set up my initial meeting. He was aware Himmler suffered from serious symptoms, and he had firsthand knowledge of the success of my treatments. Dr. Diehn thought after I built up

my relationship with Himmler, I might be of some use. He had some crazy notion I could help people out of imprisonment. Help the resistance, that sort of thing. But I'm here to see if you and your influence can get me out of this...quagmire."

Kivimaeki picked up his pen and tapped it on the desk again. "Very frankly, Doktor, I don't see what we could do for you without placing us in dire diplomatic circumstances. Believe me, I appreciate your situation. As you said yourself, Himmler's requests are not to be taken lightly."

"I see," Kersten said disappointedly.

"And I agree with Dr. Diehn." Kivimaeki tossed the pen on his desktop. "You may be of assistance. Once you gain Himmler's confidence..."

"This is dangerous enough, Ambassador. I have a family. My wife and three sons. And now you want me to...to spy on him?"

"I don't know if I would put it quite that way. But I imagine information must be flowing in a steady stream all around him. Secrets at that level don't stay secret for long. And you'll be privy to it all. We have intelligence Germany is planning to invade the Low Lands. We also have information some of the Führer's staff is, let's say, disillusioned with him. This may, in fact, even include Himmler, and other high profile members of the General Staff, General Canaris, for example. Your relationship with Himmler would be of immense interest to us. See if he shares some of the sentiments of some of the General Staff. Ah, I have something to show you."

Kivimaeki slid open a drawer and removed a manila folder, tossing it on the desk. "Here, you may find this of help." Kivimaeki pushed the folder to Kersten, who leafed through the reports.

"Walter Schellenberg, highly placed SS officer, said to be in favor of an unconditional surrender to England, an interesting man."

"This Schellenberg, he is stationed here?"

“Yes, you may very well come to meet him before long,” declared Kivimaeki. “As you see, he was appointed to the SS in July of 1933. In a couple of years, he was transferred to the security-intelligence arm of the SS where he was most happy. Now, some women were implicated in a spy ring. The femme fatales were guillotined straight away, except for two of the women, who were saved by Schellenberg and coerced into becoming double agents against the Poles.

“This Schellenberg is something of an enigma. He has committed some crimes; at the same time, rumor has it he is opposed to Hitler and would welcome a putsch against the Führer.

“In 1938, he was involved in something called the von Fritsch affair. It sparked anti-Hitler sentiment in the armed forces, gave rise to a military resistance movement led by Bech, Canaris and other high ranking officers of the General Staff. They hoped to block a move to take over German-populated Sudetenland as a prelude to dismembering Czechoslovakia. Seizing Prague. The members of this group feared the move would bring France and England to the defense of Czechs, at a time Germany was not ready for war.

“This is interesting. Reinhardt Heydrich, Nazi proconsul (Reichsprotektor) of Bohemia and Moravia, and chief of RSHA, Nazi security and intelligence apparatus, with blood on his hands, heard of this movement and ordered Schellenberg to guard him against a possible Wehrmacht putsch. It is said Heydrich cowered in a barricaded quarter pleading with Schellenberg, that Schellenberg saw a new side of Heydrich. A coward, not the man of steel, the image Heydrich tries to impress people with.

“Here’s another interesting though sordid tidbit. According to many sources Heydrich ordered Schellenberg to create a brothel for high ranking officers, it’s named Salon Kitty. As a bonus, the rooms were bugged, preserved on 25,000 wax discs. Clients even include Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop, Sepp Dietrich, the commander of Hitler’s bodyguard, and sometimes

even Himmler and Heydrich themselves. The bugs were turned off then. However, during one visit by Himmler, the bugs, accidentally, were not turned off and the meeting recorded. No one's sure why this happened, but Heydrich made it an excuse to blame Schellenberg for the incident, as if it had been done on purpose. However, Schellenberg denied the charges; there was no evidence to back it up. It was another attempt by Heydrich to discredit and discharge Schellenberg. There is no love lost between them. So, what do you think?"

Kersten shook his head. "I'm sorry, but I want no part of this. It is dangerous, too dangerous. I have my family to think of as well as my own personal safety. No, it's not possible."

"I regret your decision, Herr Kersten. You could have been of great use to us, given your unique situation."

"I'm afraid," Kersten said, "that is my final word."

"Very well. We'll see what we can do for you, but the prospect of extricating you from your situation is very remote."

"I understand," said Kersten, offering his hand.

The men shook hands and Kersten left.

Kersten massaged Himmler's stomach for the next several weeks. The treatments were highly successful, and Himmler's health improved with each session.

One day, Kersten broke the silence.

"Reichsführer," Kersten said, "I have a request."

"Yes?"

"I understand you have a personal phone line and special mail privileges, very private."

"Yes, that is true," confirmed Himmler.

“Would you be willing to let me use them?”

“Why on earth would you want to?” inquired Himmler, puzzled.

“You are my most important client, of course, but I must keep in touch with my other clients in Sweden, Finland, even here in Berlin, Reichsführer. I mustn’t ignore the rest of my practice. It is very important that the confidentiality of my communications with my clients be of the highest order. Doctor’s privilege, you understand.”

“Very well,” Himmler reluctantly agreed. “See Brandt, and he can set you up. And don’t worry. They’re of the highest security, more so than a diplomatic pouch, beyond the prying eyes and ears of my own Gestapo and SS. Just don’t,” Himmler added, “abuse the privilege. But I know I can trust you. After all, you are my magic Buddha.”

“Many thanks, Reichsführer,” Kersten replied. He returned to his ministrations of Himmler, more enthusiastically than ever.

Wednesday, May 17, 1939, 7.10 hours.

Kersten’s bedroom phone rang. He rubbed his eyes, sat up and answered the phone.

“Yes,” he said.

“This is Kivimaeki.”

“Yes, sir?” Kersten replied, yawning.

“I would like to talk with you. Can you come by this morning? It would be much appreciated.”

“Let me check,” replied Kersten. He swiped the calendar from the nightstand and found May.

“Yes, I’m free, Ambassador Kivimaeki. I’ll be there within the hour.”

“See you then,” said Kivimaeki, hanging up.

“Who’s that, dear?” asked Irmgard, stretching.

“It’s the Ambassador,” he said, slipping into his clothes. “And I think I know why he wants to see me.”

Kersten entered the Embassy and announced himself. He was issued into Kivimaeki’s office where he shook the Ambassador’s hand.

“Good morning. Please be seated,” said Kivimaeki.

“Good morning.”

“Let me show you something. Important,” said Kivimaeki. He reached into his desk and withdrew a folder which he tossed over to Kersten. “Bignell, antiquarian, part of the Resistance in the Netherlands. A small man with a beard, worn out clothes. He owns a small shop. He has been imprisoned for more than a month now. According to our sources, he is scheduled to be hanged within the week.”

“And what is this man to me?” queried Kersten, sighing.

“Nothing,” replied the Ambassador. “He’s just a man. One man in a thousand.”

“You want me to save him. What am I to say?”

“Yes. If you’re willing to help us now, think of this as a test.”

“A test.”

“Yes, no one very important. But we understand that you have a special relationship with Himmler. You have his ear. He depends on you.”

“How do you know this?” asked Kersten.

“We have our ways,” replied Kivimaeki. “We also know that you have acquired special treatment from him. That you can make use of his phone line and his private mail. Is this not true?”

“Yes,” Kersten reluctantly confirmed. “With your sources, you don’t need me.”

“Ah, but we do. Only you have Himmler in the palm of your hand.”

“I think you overestimate me.”

“Let’s see,” said Kivimaeki. “That’s all I ask. Let’s see!”

“I’ll need to think about this overnight.”

“Of course, take your time. I know I’m asking a lot,” Kivimaeki said. “Use your special line to get back to me. There are those who might want your phone tapped. You know you’re being watched?”

“I wouldn’t be surprised.”

“Well,” said Kivimaeki, rising, “I hope we have an understanding.”

“I’ll get back to you tomorrow morning.”

“Very well, goodbye.”

The men shook hands and Kersten left.

Three days later.

During the session, hands behind his head, Himmler broke the silence.

“Herr Doktor, I want to ask you a favor.”

“That is funny. I was going to ask you the same thing. Yes, Reichsführer?”

“A very important man, Rudolf Hess, is suffering like me. He has been in the inner circle long before Hitler came to power. An interesting tidbit: He was actually Hitler’s senior during the war to end all wars,” Himmler revealed. “But that all changed with the rise of the party. He even wrote down *Mein Kampf* while Hitler dictated the book during their imprisonment in Landsberg prison. He is blindly obedient to the Führer. At any rate, you have an advantage over him.”



“And that is what?” asked Kersten, pausing his massage.

“He is skeptical of conventional doctors, shuns them all together, even with the severe symptoms,” Himmler said, “that he has. He would be most sympathetic to your methods. Would you do this favor for me?”

A moment’s pause.

“Yes, I will see him. As you know, I can make no guarantees.”

“Splendid, I will have Brandt set up your first meeting. Now what is it that you wanted to tell me?”

“There is a gentleman, Bignell, an antiquarian in Holland and a dear friend and patient,” Kersten lied. “He has been arrested...”

“Yes, go on,” said Himmler.

“I ask you to release him. He has done nothing wrong, I am sure of this,” Kersten implored.

“If he’s arrested, what can I do about it?”

“One word from you and he could be saved from hanging.”

“Bignell? Antiquarian...I’ll see what I can do.”

“Many thanks, Reichsführer.”

Brandt set up the appointment for Hess that Friday at Kersten’s apartment in Berlin. He warned Kersten that Hess was very sensitive.

Friday morning, Kersten met Hess for the first time. The session was going well, Hess confessing mid-week he had queried a horoscope for this day and it was favorable for the meeting. Hess was tall, thin, with heavy brows and deep-set brown eyes, a sculptured face with high cheekbones. He seemed to enjoy talking; some of it was very sentimental. He talked of

love, of watching with great poignancy lovers on the street. He confessed to being envious and touched by such a sight. “There is no more beautiful sight than that of a young man and his girl walking together, hand in hand.” Tears would well up in his eyes.

On his third visit, Kersten met Hess at his home. Hess admitted being treated for impotence with unorthodox methods. On that day, Kersten caught him in the middle of such a treatment, a giant magnet hovering above his groin with 12 magnets underneath his butt. This contrivance was said to draw harmful substances from his body to cure his impotence. Hess wondered if Kersten’s cures could alleviate this ailment.

“I don’t know, but let’s see if that’s possible.”

“I have a great love of everything Egyptian,” Hess disclosed. “In my retirement after the War I will move to Alexandria, fill the rooms with Egyptian décor and a library with thousands of beautiful books of Arabic text.” He would convert to Islam.

“Otherwise I may move to Bavaria and live a hermit’s life, scorning visitors except for the Wise Men.”

“Who are these Wise Men?”

“Leagues of clairvoyants and astrologists.” He would endure a simple, out-of-door life, eating a vegetarian lifestyle, like the Führer, of plants and herbs.

Hess talked about the war and having seen the devastation first hand. He was heard saying, “Oh terrible! That this flowering landscape has been so ravaged! Why did not the world listen to Hitler and his plan for peace?” More tears fell.

Hess confessed about his feelings toward Britain. “It must survive. It must resist Bolshevism. Pragmatic England would sooner put her head in the Soviet’s noose than come to an agreement with us. But,” he added, “someone must talk them into a solitary, conditional peace.” He talked

of the end of the War when Greater Germany would prevail, thanks in part by a mysterious flight he had been long planning. "I will go down in history," he would say.

Hess had read a work by the Lord Marquess of Clidesdale, *The Pilot's Guide to Everest*, based on his epic flight to the Himalayas in a primitive bi-plane in 1933. Hess was also aware of Clidesdale's groundbreaking flight over Mount Everest.

Hess was also inspired by keeping track of supporters of appeasement in England. He was aware of Major Fetherston Godly, one of five members of the British Legion, a group devoted to keeping peace with Germany. There was also a secret meeting by the Anglo-German fellowship, the Legion, to discuss peace with Germany just months before war broke out. Hess was also aware of British Prime Minister Chamberlain's controversial program of appeasement. Hess also kept abreast of the Duke of Windsor's public interest in a negotiated peace, calling Churchill a war monger.

Godly attended the Olympics in Germany in 1936 where he met Hess; there Godly was quoted as saying "We British never felt anything but respect for German enemies in the war years on the other side of the trenches."

One month after Germany's declaration of war, an article in the Times of London caught Hess's eye. In it, Clidesdale pleaded for a settlement between the warring parties, writing that a settlement ought to be made among honorable men.

In 1940, Clidesdale's father passed away, making the Marquess the Duke of Hamilton. He continued his efforts for a negotiated peace with Germany, something noted by Hess. Hess knew that such a peace effort would be thwarted by Prime Minister Churchill whose stance was total obliteration of Germany as the only successful outcome of the war: No negotiation. Hess needed

to look elsewhere for his dream of a speedy conclusion to the war. The Duke of Hamilton seemed a prime candidate.

Churchill was keenly aware of the dissidents in his government and elsewhere. He appointed the Duke of Windsor as the Governor of the Bahamas to bottle up his criticisms of his regime. Lord Halifax, Churchill's most vocal opponent, was also a supporter of appeasement. Churchill appointed him Ambassador to the United States and replaced him with Anthony Eden, a pro-Churchill, pro-war politician.