

Doctor von Bismarck: A Tale of Obsession

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The Lighthouse

Doctor von Bismarck: A Tale of Obsession

BOOK ONE

My Mad Scientist Time Traveler

Chapter One

Heinrich

Imagine how the Vaterland will be far in the future!

Today, at last, I test my Zeitzkarte. That is far better to mark my forty-second birthday than any gift. Since so many years have I worked on it, researched and designed and built. Yes, check the dials, check the circuitry—Perfekt!

The housekeeper and cook are long since gone to bed. Alone in the makeshift lab on the top floor of my house, I remove my smock, straighten my suit, and rearrange my hairs with a little pomade. Oh, yes, and fetch my coat, in case it is cold there.

I would rather do this for its own sake, as intended many years ago—too many—in the University of Berlin. But Klara's father has other plans—and, to be sure, so do I.

Schweinehunde!

And it is ready to go. Where should I go first—fifty years in the future? What advances will we have by then, with all of the Reich united?

Madge

When exactly did the hypnotism start—maybe when I first met my Sven-gali? But I'm pretty sure the attraction was for real, because he was twice my age but totally hot. I guess if I write it all down like my friends and family keep telling me to, I can figure it out.

Oh, and I promise not to get too technical with scientific descriptions. I know it drives non-scientist people crazy when I do that.

Saturday, September 19, 1992. I popped a mint and checked my teeth in a little mirror in my backpack. I had to make a good impression, after all. I just lost my job at Radio Shack, and if I couldn't pay my rent, I'd have to move back in with my parents. Ugh! I mean, I loved my parents, but I was a sophomore in college now.

My jacket fended off the cold wind. *This is sixty degrees?* It was only mid-afternoon, but dark with all the clouds. I knocked and shut off my Walkman, which just happened to be playing “Svengali” by Steve Taylor. Okay, yeah, I’d been backing up and replaying it for the past twenty minutes, but I wasn’t being precognitive or anything.

The man who opened the door was a whole foot taller than me: six feet five inches. Ramrod-straight posture. Broad shoulders; excellent shape for a man his age. Clean-shaven. Full head of light brown hair, a bit out of order. Not the usual clinical lab coat, like you’d find in your friendly neighborhood pharmacy. No, this was long and gray, with a line of open, black buttons. Stereotypical mad scientist extraordinaire! I grinned.

He gave me the once-over, which guys did a lot. Because of my religion, I covered my body thoroughly and with such loose clothes that even my mother complained, but that still didn’t hide the hourglass curves. But he was way too polite and reserved for a creepy leer.

“I’m here about the ad.” I held it out to him, as if he couldn’t remember what he himself wrote on the piece of yellow legal paper:

Lab Assistant for Inventor

Requirements: High marks in science, especially physics, and mathematics; very good knowledge of German.

Hours vary based on class schedule of qualified applicant.

I’d squealed right in the middle of the student union when I saw that on the bulletin board. Only a few people were there on the weekend, but they all turned to look at me. After turning beet-red, I snatched the ad. It was mine, dang it, and nobody else could have it! I took the next bus to the address listed. And now I was here, staring at Mr. Mad Scientist.

He grinned. “What for a pleasant surprise! I have just posted this note. *Bitte kommen Sie rein.*”

I smiled back at his handsome face. Thirties, maybe? No, not with that bit of gray at his temples. Very early forties?

He stepped back and held the door. The job was in his own house?

His voice was soft but deep, soothing, full of rich tones, like your favorite late-night DJ. “My name is *Doktor* Heinrich von Bismarck. I am inventor. And what is your name, *Fräulein?*”

All that roleplaying in high school German was finally useful. “Madge Rush, college student. *Guten Tag, Herr Doktor von Bismarck. Es freut mich, Sie kennen zu lernen.*” I put out my hand; he shook it the American way, and with a strong grip. I felt at ease.

Germans shake hands before and after meeting with people, more than Americans do, so I’d have to get used to this.

“Apologies for my state of disorder. I expected no visitors.” He ran a hand through his hair to smooth it down; I wished he wouldn’t. “And how are your marks in science and mathematics?”

“All A’s. I’m majoring in Physics and minoring in Astronomy.”

“Excellent. And how well do you speak German?”

“I’ve taken it for six years now, and get A’s there as well.”

All doors in the house were closed. He took me to his lab on the second floor. It was full of notes and diagrams and equipment, but clean and in order. Two closed doors were nearby, one for a small bathroom, but he didn’t say what the other one was for. He motioned me to a small wooden chair by a desk, and sat on a stool across from me.

As he settled himself, I peered more closely at the diagrams pinned to a corkboard. One was an anti-aircraft, or flak, gun from World War II; I saw them in movies. Others were maps of the world with little question marks pointing to various points on them. In the middle of the room was a globe; several clocks of various time zones hung around the walls. Various pieces of electrical equipment were scattered around, along with tools. I could barely keep from squealing.

My voice cracked and my palms sweated as he quizzed me for some twenty minutes or so on physics, everything from the theory of relativity to Schrödinger’s Cat. About halfway through, without warning, he switched to German. I blinked, then shook it off and started speaking in German.

His deep-set, dark eyes captured mine as if to examine my soul. They seemed gentle and honest.

Ah, what a sexy accent! Despite his excellent English, those foreign consonants and vowel differences kept slipping him up.

He said, “*Sehr gut.* You seem to be suitable. At last, someone to help me by my experiment.”

I practically squeaked. "Experiment?"

I could not look away as he bent forward and said, "Have you ever longed to know how the future will look?"

"Of course; all the time."

"Would you like to know how wars will end, or how the technology will progress?"

I smiled. "Or even if that guy who broke my heart is worth crying over."

He smiled back. "That would save time, yes." He fiddled a bit with the collar of his lab coat. "Would you like to know whether someone whom you have just met deserves your trust?" He patted down his collar.

"That would save some time, too."

His voice turned deep, low, and smooth. "If you could invent a device to travel through the time, would you?"

"Of course. I dream about it all the time."

"Excellent. Imagine what it would be like to travel fifty years in the future!"

I sighed with a dopey grin, imagining.

He continued. "I have not just imagined, but done so."

My eyes must've bugged out. He reached into his pocket, leaned closer toward me, and held out a thick metal card about the size of his hand. On it were dials and a red thumb-sized button. I leaned toward him to get a better look. I glanced up for a micro-second, his head so close to mine that I got all tingly.

"I programmed in the start date and coordinates with these dials—" he pointed to the side labeled *von*— "and today's date with these dials—" he pointed to the side labeled *zu*. "Then I pushed this red button and was transported here. I should have stayed in *Deutschland*, but obviously the card has a defect."

I gasped. "Time travel? That'd be awesome if true."

"It is. I traveled from September 1942 to your time."

He looked at me, I looked at him in surprise, he smiled—and I got all tingly again. I blinked and looked back at the card.

Well, that would explain why he used the old-fashioned term *Fräulein*. My German teacher told us grown women didn't like to be called that anymore.

"How can I be sure that's really a time machine and you're not just some crazy dude who's going to forget to pay me?"

"I'll prove that you can trust me. *Einen Augenblick, bitte.*"

He left the room for a bit, then came back. He'd switched his house slippers for shoes, taken off his lab coat, and put on a trilby and a long, black, cashmere overcoat.

His double-breasted, dark woolen suit looked expensive and well-tailored, and seemed old-fashioned. He wore it with a dignified and arrogant air. His hair was now properly combed back, losing some of its charm, but the coat made up for that.

He strolled up to me, held out a hand, and grinned. "*Bitte, reichen Sie mir die Hand.*"

I simpered. "But we just met." Something about this guy made me feel free to be myself.

"No, no, I would like to show you what the *Zeitkarte* can do. It emits a force field to hold the user, but will hold no others if they do not touch each other."

"Didn't you say it has a defect?"

"Ja, but I can go back to the time I left, then return here without incident. I have tested this, and have only changed the present date and time." He put one hand on his chest. "You can trust the *Zeitkarte*."

What could be the harm? I gave him my hand; his felt warm and smooth, and gave mine a little shock. He'd probably rubbed his feet on the carpet before putting on his shoes, but at the time I got this crazy idea that he was magic. He tipped his head down and looked up at me with an oddly intent gaze. He pulled me up and pushed the button.

Everything around us turned gray for a moment, then changed:

The temperature was the same but the wind stopped and the sun came out. Cheerful people passed us by, some with baby carriages. We stood beside a townhouse with BISMARCK on the mailbox, at the end of a solid block of posh, brick townhouses. They were narrow but built

upward, four stories. Ornately carved and sculptured stone lined the windows; each story had large windows with a balcony.

"The entire townhouse belongs to me," Dr. Bismarck said. That had to be expensive.

In front of us was a street lined with shops so close together they seemed to share a wall. Some had smooth masonry, and some had half-timbers. All the signs were in German.

Old-fashioned cars drove past, the smell of their exhaust proving this was no dream. People strolled along the sidewalks, going in the shops, catching buses.

Several little girls wore pigtails either hanging down, or pinned around their heads—like mine, since I liked old-fashioned hairdos. There were many more women than men, and most of the men were middle-aged and older, except for soldiers on leave. Hairstyles fit with the 1940s, but clothes tended to be raggedy, though the women tried to make them stylish. Few skirts went past the knees. But many wore pants which looked like they were taken from their husbands' closets and hemmed up. A couple of shopgirls wore pinned-up pigtails and dirndls, but even those looked ragged. The people spoke in a strange version of German.

I let go of Dr. Bismarck's hand and went up to his house to touch the wall. Yep, it was real, rough and hard, just like brick. He waited and watched as I wandered up and down the sidewalk by the townhouses, then crossed the street and looked into the shops.

An air raid siren scared me half to death. Variations on "What, in the middle of the day?" and curses came from the Berliners. Some scurried for air-raid shelters; some searched the empty sky. Gas masks appeared, as did an elderly man in a helmet marked *Luftschutz*. He started leading people into a shelter marked with a white arrow, handing out gas masks, and tapping on windows where lights were still on.

I was afraid the planes would appear overhead at any moment and kill me decades before my birth. But the air warden screamed at me in his strange dialect,

"No! Don't run that way! The shelter is over here! Everyone must be orderly."

But I finally made it to Dr. Bismarck and took his hand. I gasped out, "I'm convinced. Take me back!"

He took me back to modern-day South Bend; I caught my breath and felt like kissing the carpet of his living room.

Heinrich

I have met an American girl in this time, so different from the ones in my own, yet so much the same. What for a pretty picture she made as she stood on my doorstep. Her hair is wavy and red-brown. She smiles with full, round lips, and puts sparkles in her large and enchanting blue-green eyes. Sometimes her eyes are turquoise, and sometimes they are aqua. They tilt slightly and are framed by naturally dark, long lashes. And I could easily see in her eyes that I have impressed her. I watched as she walked along my street in Berlin and swayed the hips.

Why am I thinking about that? No woman could interest me now. My only aim is vengeance for Klara—to snatch it from God's hand because He has shown that He does not care about justice. This girl's intelligence makes her valuable to me. Yes, that is why I must have her as my assistant, and not because I can't help but admire the curves of her body.

Madge

My heart fluttered as I caught him glance at me for a moment too long. *Geez, Madge, get a hold of yourself! The dude's probably old enough to be your DAD!*

I cleared my throat. "What was up with their clothes in Berlin? They looked old and worn."

"Berlin is rife with clothing shortages," he said. "One has ration cards, but can find neither cloth, nor even needles or thread. My suit is a few years old and in good condition, but some of my clothes have holes. Even your own clothing looks much better than theirs, despite the strange fashion. That is what women wear in 1992?"

“Well, what teen-age girls wear.” Just simple pants with a T-shirt, since I was so anxious to check out this job that I had no time to change into proper interview clothes. “I’m nineteen. Hey, wait a minute. You’re not a Nazi, are you?”

He looked away for a moment. “No, I am not. I’d much rather see that the monarchy is reinstated. It was good to learn that the National Socialists lost the war.”

“This isn’t some Luftwaffe-sponsored experiment? I’m not helping the Nazis win the war?” To be polite, I smiled as if I were joking, but I was serious.

The spot between his eyebrows flicked into a little V, then smooth again. “No, no, no Luftwaffe. I’m working on this entirely on my own. You can trust me: I hate the National Socialists, what they’ve done to *Deutschland*. We will work here, in my lab upstairs.”

I gasped and my voice got a bit...loud. “So we’re working against the Nazi government?”

“We’re working on my own project, for my own pleasure. I have worked since many years on this, and I desperately wanted to escape the war.”

We sorted out the mundane stuff, and settled that my pay would be in cash, so no taxes would be removed—and he wouldn’t have to explain to the government who he was or where he came from.

Chapter Two

Madge

Every afternoon after my last class, he drove me to his little two-story rental house, and gave me a pair of knitted slippers which he said were just for me.

The first day, I felt shy but starstruck: I was Sarah Jane to Doctor Who, Marty McFly to Doc, Weena to George. And yes, like Weena or Sarah Jane, I was a bit in love with the time traveler.

Yeah, *Herr Doktor* was old, but hormones combined with awe do strange things to a girl my age at that time. Come to think of it, I also get tingly watching that Rotwang guy on *Metropolis*. I guess I just have a thing for mad scientists. Except for Dr. Frankenstein, because that's just ew.

But my dad was 35 when I was born, so when I thought of "dad age" at 19, I thought of a guy well into his 50s, not *Herr Doktor*.

After a few exhausting hours of me cleaning and him telling me what to clean, he didn't take me back to my studio apartment until late. I barely had time to finish up my homework before collapsing into bed.

Next day, my heart beat furiously as *Herr Doktor* pulled up in his new car (a Mercedes), and I rushed out the door, blocking the cat with my leg as she tried to get out. His "*Guten Tag*" sent me all a-shiver. I must have driven him crazy with my chatter on all the time travel movies and TV shows I'd seen, though he just smiled at me.

His hair was usually slicked back like in the 1940s, not mad scientist-wild. But a strand always seemed to fall rakishly across his forehead near his eyes. Occasionally, though, he got so into his work that he forgot to tend to his hair. He often ran his fingers through it absentmindedly as well. When that happened, it did look very much like Rotwang's hair in *Metropolis*, losing its forced side-part and hanging shaggy. And as he stood there wearing his lab coat and examining some twisted contraption, my heart did the topsy-turvy.

Whenever he bent over a table or sat in a chair and looked up at me, something about the angle made his face especially handsome. It was vampiric in a way. I'd lose myself in those dark, deep-set, almond, hooded eyes, as if they were hypnotic, grabbing hold of my soul, binding me to him. The dark, straight eyebrows defined them; they almost seemed shy at that angle. His forehead was high; his hair, when he'd been mussing it up, fell around a widow's peak and framed his oval face; his mouth and nose were strong, masculine.

Of course he didn't wear that lab coat all the time: The rest of the time, he dressed very well, in modern, expensive suits much of the time—often with a vest—and carried them well, with a dignified and arrogant air. Over it all, when the weather cooled, he often wore his trilby and the long, black, cashmere overcoat bought in his own time, which really turned my head.

More than once, I'd bend over some task he gave me, or eat some snack he gave me; I'd glance up, see his trim and muscular figure, and not be able to pull my eyes away. He'd feel my stare and look back at me. I'd flick my eyes toward my work, pretending to have kept my eyes on that the whole time.

But I saw him in my peripheral vision: The first time, he shrugged and looked back at his own work. The second time, his eyebrows knit together in confusion. The third time, a tiny smile flickered across his mouth. I couldn't help flushing, hoping he didn't notice, afraid my whole face betrayed me.

Sometimes after work, we'd fall into conversation. One night on the drive home I said,

"About our trip to Berlin: Why did their German sound so—weird?"

"That is the Berlinerische dialect."

"Oh, that's right, we learn High German, but you have all those dialects, just like we have all these different accents. At college I meet people from other states, and they say we have the 'TV accent' here. How do you speak such good English?"

"As a child, sometimes I spent holidays in England with relations of my mother. Also I am sometimes obliged to work together with English scientists. And how do you speak such good German?"

"I've been into World War II stuff for years: the movies, *Hogan's Heroes*, the pop culture of the time. I love old movies from the '30s and '40s. I took German because of that. Not because I like the Nazis—which I don't—but because I had this romantic idea of, what if a time storm hit me and I ended up spying for the Underground? Which was silly, except—well, here you are."

He laughed. "Such a strange girl you are."

I flushed and grinned. "And then after learning about Germany and the Germans in high school, their history and the culture, I just love all things German. Except for the Nazis and Holocaust, of course. And my teacher in high school was Polish, and she was a kid during the Occupation, so she had all these stories about growing up during the war. She taught us things about the war that we didn't go into much in History class, showed us movies from the concentration camps, all that. And we learned a little about the bombing of Berlin."

He seemed a bit bored by my teenage prattle, focusing on the road, but that got his attention. His tone shifted and he sat even straighter, alert. "Really? What did you learn?"

"That historical buildings were destroyed. Beyond that, I don't remember; it's been a few years since Frau told us about it."

"How many times was it bombed?"

"I don't remember. I think this was late in the war."

"Late? When does it end? I have read a little on the War, but I have been busy with my work and—*wie sagt man*—the establishment of my residence. I forgot the date."

"1945, when the Germans finally surrender."

We were at a stoplight; he pressed the tips of his fingers together and against his mouth. "*O weh!* That means still more is to come."

"What's that?"

"Remember, I came from Berlin. It was quiet, but the bombing has already started."

I muted myself on this, realizing all of a sudden that this wasn't a history book, wasn't some theatrical movie about GI heroes, but was his life and current events.

One day when I had to do his housework, I decided to make the work more fun and introduce *Herr Doktor* to modern music at the same time. So I brought in my jam box, set it on a coffee table and turned on some of the industrial rock I'd been exposed to at college: the band KMFDM.

I started cleaning to their single "Godlike." I cranked it up a little more and danced around the kitchen.

Herr Doktor stormed down from his lab, yelling German curses, and a sexily heavily accented "What is that for a racket?" His accent got thicker whenever he was upset, stressed, excited or distracted. He turned in to the kitchen and found the jam box and me. I stopped dancing, feeling like a naughty child caught digging in the cookie jar. I snorted, trying to hold back a laugh.

"Is that supposed to be music? What is become of it in fifty years?" He gestured toward the jam box. "And what is that for a contraption? Make it quieter!"

I fought a smile as I turned down the volume and paused the CD. "Okay, *Dad*." I laughed. "Come on, it's a German band."

"If you weren't so clever and so—" he shook his finger in my face, then looked into my eyes and stopped short— "pretty—I'd smack you in the head."

I grinned up at him. He kept away from me so much that I thought I imagined him giving me a once-over on our first meeting. This little slip in his reserve freed me up to be more open myself.

He stared at me for a moment, blinked, then asked in a calmer voice, "What is that for a noisemaker?"

"It's a jam box. See, there's the radio, this is a tape player—remember the Walkman I showed you?—and this is a CD." I pushed open the player and pulled out the CD. "See that? Isn't that neat? These have been

around for about ten years now, and they're a great improvement on the old ways."

He bent close to me to look. My breath stopped for a moment at him being so close, feeling the heat of his own breath, thankfully fresh with toothpaste.

"What is happened to *Platten*?"

My voice trembled a little. "Nobody makes records anymore because nobody wants them. It's either tapes or CDs now. The sound is better, they're more durable.... You can even listen to them in the car or on a walk. You can't do that with a record."

He took the CD out of my hand, tickling my palm with his fingertips.

"Careful: Don't touch the part without print. That's where the sound is embedded, and you can smudge it. It's all digital now."

He examined it. "Fascinating. But why does the music sound so bad?"

"Bad? It's supposed to sound like that."

"It is?"

"Maybe you're not ready for KMFDM. Why don't I play some Christian rock for you instead." I switched to Whiteheart's *Powerhouse*, a CD of rock mixed with beautiful melodies.

"It's a bit better, yes, but it still has that constant beat. I do not understand you modern Americans. Everything began with that decadent swing and jazz...."

I chuckled. "We're just a bunch of degenerates. If you like, I can play all sorts of things for you, so you can catch up. This isn't all I listen to. Maybe some evening when we're not working...."

I fluttered my eyelashes a little. I don't *think* I did it on purpose, but it apparently unnerved him. His eyebrows drew together a bit. He cleared his throat and switched to German-boss-mode again.

"Back to the work, and don't play the music *so laut*!" He snapped his fingers under my nose—it felt like a joke more than a serious gesture—and hurried back to his lab.

I giggled and followed his orders.

Heinrich

My young assistant is infatuated with me. In my own time, nubile young girls flirt with me, but I have no illusions about why. And I have no use for a girl who will marry the rich, widowed Junker solely for money, then cuckold me in the afternoon. After I have experienced love, why would I want less?

I think that Fräulein Rush is merely overwhelmed by admiration for my abilities, and thinks she loves me. I did not intend to be her mentor, but she sees me as one.

Her childish fascination for science-fiction films has also influenced her. "Mad scientist," she calls me. I don't think I truly fit such a motif. Mad? No, not mad, despite the occasional flashes of memory from the war, and moments of rage—though the memory of my wife can make me feel mad at times.

Fräulein Rush is beautiful and brilliant, but far too young to think of her beyond harmless flirtation. Besides, the memory of my wife still fills my heart.

No, I must forget all lustful thoughts, and concentrate on the goal, for my country, and for my wife and children. These books from the year 1992 tell me that those murderers will pummel my Fatherland for far too long, that my home will ultimately be turned over to the Soviets!

Still, perhaps my efforts will change things in my time, and save countless civilians along with the Prussian nobility.

However, the infatuation of Fräulein Rush could be useful to me. I need the utmost loyalty from her, but she is steadfastly against that she helps my country. If she finds out my purpose here too soon, I'll be forced to find someone else with her brilliance and language skills.

I should not encourage it, yet it flatters me that a girl who is so young is attracted to someone of my age. No, I should encourage it, for the Reich.... Or is it for me?

Madge

Later on, when he finally took me into the lab, we bent over a table, and *Herr Doktor* took off the back panel of the time card to explain to me its inner workings.

He said, "These blueprints here will help when you forget what I just showed you. I would like that you study them so you soon will no longer need them. Here, put the panel back on."

I started screwing the panel back on, but he stayed next to me, his arms folded on the table, his head close to mine. My breath grew shallow, but I forced myself to focus.

He said, "I would like to start speaking in German as we work, and also at other times whenever I speak in German to you. Then we can truly understand each other."

I looked into his eyes and made a flirty smile. "Aw, but then I won't get to hear your accent."

He raised an eyebrow. "Why do you like German so much? I speak English, but don't get giddy over American accents as you do over German ones."

I glanced at the back panel to put in another screw. "Part of it is background: My dad goes way back to Brits, but my mom's grandparents were Germans. Sort of reconnecting with my roots."

"So you have Ary—So you have good German blood in you." He smiled.

I knew what he was about to say before he corrected himself, but chose to ignore it. "And it's so much fun to say: It sounds like growling. I practiced saying *ich* until I got it just right, even though all my classmates still said 'ish.' Now I can talk like the Scottish, too, because they have the same sound." I grinned. "Oh, and my favorite word is—" I raised my voice and shook a fist and pronounced the word as if spitting— "*Ach-TUNG!* I feel like I'm hocking a loogie."

He looked confused. "What is this 'hocking a loogie'?"

"Er—Never mind." I giggled, while he looked at me as if I were crazy.

"Why do I have the feeling that you tease me?" He did not actually touch the tip of my nose with his finger, but shook it very close. This sud-

den familiarity thrilled me, until I realized he probably saw me as a child. The corner of his mouth turned up. “You have no respect for your elders, none at all.”

I felt he was flirting back at me, but wasn’t sure. I tittered, flushed a little, and turned back to the tiny screwdriver. “I hope I’m not offending you with my American casualness when we’re supposed to be ‘vorking.’”

His eyes crinkled. “More teasing. No, I must not expect perfect German behavior. It is odd, but—*wie sagt man*—refreshing.”

I suspected I wouldn’t get away with it if I were named Matt instead of Madge, but didn’t want to go too far by saying so. I finished with the panel and gestured to it. “Done. What now, boss?”

“Now to show you how to program the coordinates and use the dials. We have a few problems to sort out with the *Zeitkarte*, because the *zu* coordinates do not match where I actually end up.”

Heinrich

She is brilliant. She quickly understood the functionality of the *Zeitkarte*, and has already started looking for possible improvements. Sometimes during the work, I ask her a random question on physics or chemistry, and she answers swiftly and correctly without that she looks up from her task.

My familiarities with her were strange at first, but every time I am together with her, they become easier. Her American openness inspires me to the same. I feel drawn to her. I don’t wish to be strictly professional with her. I can see in her eyes that she feels the same.

Sometimes I ask myself if it was wise to hire such a beauty. If we’re not often in the same room, I can focus on my work and not on those eyes and curves. Her happy voice with her silly stories about movies and television—she fills the lab with cheer that I have not felt since such a long time.

When she bends over at a nearby table, my gaze wanders to her. Then I imagine crushing her to me and—no, that won’t do at all, so I force it out of my head.

I must make a determined effort to stop this levity during the work. It distracts me from my purpose here. Though when work is over with for the day, I would like to learn more about the life in this time.

She has no idea that I use my tricks to bring her to trust me. She does not notice when I imitate her movements, expressions or tone. She does not notice how I use my voice and eyes. She does not know that I paint a picture in her mind.

Her help is vital to me; that is why I hypnotize. Her knowledge of the future science will give me the advantage I need, something the Allies can't possibly have.

Chapter Three

Madge

On the way to work one day, we rode in silence for a bit, Mozart on the radio, the wipers whirring a steady rhythm. I hesitated, but finally blurted out at a stop:

“How can I be sure you’re not a Nazi?”

His eyes held mine without blinking for a moment. “First of all, I am the son of a Junker.”

“What is that?”

“Since generations, Junkers have owned most of the farmland in Prussia. Up until after the First World War, we were lords, barons, counts, rulers of Prussia. And Prussia ruled Germany.”

I gasped. “So you’re royalty?”

“Not quite. Many of us were fighting to survive when the Party came to power.” As he drove on again, his voice deepened. “Imagine our plight: We were in the midst of the Great Depression. Foreigners sold Germans cheaper produce. We needed modern equipment, but how would one pay for it? Many landowners mortgaged their ancestral estates, or even put them on the auction block. Can you imagine what that was like, how desperate they were?”

“Yeah, I can see that. Did the Nazis promise a better life?”

“Yes, along with many other promises—such as the end to street violence. Even if we didn’t like the Party, we believed that the life would be better now. But one could not trust them.”

He paused, making a turn. I watched the rain drops falling on the pane of the passenger door window. One fell into another, forming one big drop. As a kid, I imagined they were people, fighting and merging into super-drops. Now, I imagined they were Nazis, absorbing citizens into one big brainwashed Party.

He started driving again, and fell back into painting a picture in my head. “They are also barbarians, while we are Christians. I and many oth-

ers want that the monarchy is restored, but we share many ideals with the National Socialists—at least, we were brought to believe this.”

“You did? What ideals did Nazis have other than genocide?”

He glared at me for a quick moment, then turned back to the road. “You speak of genocide, after your country's treatment of the Negroes and the Indians? We're not the monsters your propaganda made us out to be.”

I stared at him in surprise for a moment. For his generation the term “Negro” was still proper, but I couldn't let the rest slide. “You are aware of what the Nazis did, aren't you?”

“I'm aware of what the Allies *say* they did.”

I felt cold. “But, dude, you're not a Nazi, right?”

Traffic forced him to pay attention to the road, but he kept his testy tone. “Remember to use the proper address. I am not ‘Dude,’ but ‘*Herr Doktor*.’ You Americans forget so easily.”

I bristled, but gulped down my indignation so he'd keep paying me. “*Herr Doktor*, I apologize.”

His tone calmed. “That is better. No, I am no Nazi. I do, however, defend the honor of my fellow Germans.”

“Okay, so what ideals did you share?”

“To strengthen Germany, abolish the Versailles Treaty, transform the economy, rebuild our military, take the country back from Communism and godlessness. The National Socialists were extremists, but no other group was strong enough to gain support. They convinced many that they shared our concerns that the Weimar government would turn us into a secular state, in which we were not even allowed to pray publicly in the classroom anymore. They said Christianity would once again dominate in Germany. Many young aristocrats were lured by Party promises to make them officers in a strong new military.”

“But you older ones didn't want to be a *new* elite: You wanted to go back to the old monarchy.”

“Correct.”

“But isn't that a big thing to disagree on? How did you reconcile it?”

“An easily manipulated, senile president, and Hitler's threat to expose the tax evasion of Junkers.”

I snorted. "Oh, that figures. Always follow the money, they say."

"We thought we could keep Hitler under our control."

I rested my head on the fingers of my right hand, and looked sideways at him. "So that's how he became the leader? I thought he was elected by the people because he scapegoated Jews and got everyone on his side."

"We did not want the Party in charge; we made this unholy alliance with the intent to take over again, to restore Christianity to dominance as they promised us. But Hitler quickly took control and made himself dictator. His brownshirted thugs began to attack even our churches!"

The anger in his voice sounded real. I had seen him annoyed but not angry, so this surprised me.

"They interfere in our prices, and decide when and what we can plant, which causes unrest among the farmers. Again and again, our labor pool is called up to war. Our women are too tired to produce children." At another stoplight, he covered his eyes with his left hand. "And what is happened with the arts, with literature—it is appalling! Without our many superb composers and musicians, we would have no more culture."

"So the Nazis pulled a bait and switch, while you Junkers were too arrogant." I hoped this wouldn't poke the beast, but I said it anyway because I'm brave like that.

My little barb got a sharp look, but also, "Correct. And the rejection of 'Jewish' science—I have seen for myself how these notions affect us, in the young men and women who come into the laboratories of the father of my wife."

My stomach seemed to drop off a cliff and thud on the ground. Mr. Hot and Sexy Mad Scientist had a wife?

I said, "I thought the Germans would be a scientific force to be reckoned with."

He turned to smile at me. "You, *Fräulein* Rush, are a refreshing change after years of scarce and ignorant assistants. We trusted the Party far too much. They betrayed us."

The car arrived at his house and the conversation ended.

Heinrich

What for a relief to leave her in the kitchen to clean, while I hurried up to my lab. At first, I did nothing other than to sit at the desk and ponder.

She did not know that I told her only part of the truth—or the guilt that inexplicably filled me over this. Yes, I am disgusted by the true character of the National Socialists, whether the rumors of genocide are true or not. But I must support my country.

I became member of the Party years ago: Hitler pretended to honor the Junkers, spun a hypnotic web over all our eyes, and brought jobs. Now that I see the truth, if I were to renounce my membership, my position as a scientist would be forfeit—and I could not revenge myself on Klara's murderers.

And...I must support Hitler. I must. I took the oath of allegiance to him years ago. I cannot turn the back to him. An oath is sacred and must be kept....

Madge

The weeks passed, flying by as I helped *Herr Doktor* pick out the necessities of modern life: microwave, television with cable, VCR, stereo. He loved how television and radio had advanced. Turns out TV already existed in his time, and the Berlin Olympics were broadcast over it.

I thought he was attracted to me, but he didn't do anything about it, and some days he ignored my flirts, so maybe I was wrong. I didn't want to creep him out or lose my awesome job, so I backed off a little, but still smiled at him a lot, except when he got crabby. See, he didn't mince words when I did or said something he did not like. I think if you asked him, he'd say he wasn't mean about it, just direct.

At first, a lot of our work time was spent sharing knowledge. For example, one day I took the periodic table to work, and showed him the new elements. Yep, I'm such a nerd that I have a poster of the periodic table, along with German castles and landscapes, sci-fi movies, the occa-

sional industrial band, and a big picture of the fourth Doctor Who, complete with long scarf and jelly babies and TARDIS.

Another day, Heinrich reviewed what I knew about quantum physics. Then I turned around and brought in books describing the advances of the last 50 years. I had a class in the subject that semester, and ended up way ahead of the rest of the class because of poring over the book with *Herr Doktor*.

I brought him my dog-eared copy of a book on DNA, and showed him pictures of the Hubble Telescope.

We'd move our chairs close together in the lab or living room, looking at the books, our arms and faces near to each other but never quite touching, his face lit up. Sometimes *Herr Doktor* bought some piece of modern technology to play with, while other times I got permission to go in the campus labs with him.

Boyish wonder shone in his face as one of the science professors showed him the equipment and how to use it. He lost his German reserve and smiled, laughed, and slipped into a heavier accent. On the way back to his place afterwards, he opened up a little about himself—college science teachers, school experiments, the work he did in his own time, mostly research and development in his father-in-law's various factories.

Herr Doktor's eyes were starting to freeze up when he looked down, so he often called me over to take notes for him. Sometimes we got a little close as we both turned to look at something; I felt the heat, and his voice trembled a little. But he kept things formal when we worked, and I was always *Fräulein* Rush.

However, afterwards he waved me to a couple of brand-new armchairs in his spotless, uncluttered living room. Of course I cleaned it, but now I actually got to sit in it as a guest. We sat down next to heavy curtains with a sheer. It was dark, so he closed the curtains. Despite an overhead light, he only turned on a couple of lamps, leaving the room shadowy and dreamy. A bookcase stood nearby, already half-full of the books he'd been collecting since he arrived here, mostly science and history books.

He got me into conversation on modern American culture, politics and what happened in Germany after World War II.

He still never called me “Madge.”

He took my hand to help me out of the armchair after a break, making me warm and tingly. He made sure I was warm enough, gave me milk and cookies. One night he offered me stronger drink, but I said, “No, thanks—It’s against the law. I’m only 19, and it’s also against my religion.”

“What? Is it against the law that a girl of your age drinks beer? And good German beer, not that American *Schmutzwasser*? And you say *we* have an oppressive regime!”

Herr Doktor taught me all sorts of scientific terms in German. Where my accent was too American, he stopped and repeated it so I could hear the proper sounds. If I still could not get them right, he showed me how to move my mouth or tongue to form them. Sometimes he even grabbed my mouth and molded it into position, especially with umlauts. You’d think that would give me a thrill, given my huge crush on him, but no, it made me try to wriggle out of his fingers. If I missed some fine point of grammar, he corrected it. German word order can be very confusing. At first, it got a bit annoying.

“I don’t have to be perfect at everything!” I clenched my fists.

He put his own fist on his hip. “Don’t you wish to sound like a German?”

I pouted a little. “Your English is German.”

“So help me to make it English.”

“No, I like it that way. And if I like *your* foreign accent, what’s wrong with mine?”

He raised a finger. “Can you understand me when I speak?”

“Yes, very well.”

“If I spoke with an accent so thick or grammar so poor that you could not understand me, if I changed the meaning of words with my bad pronunciation, what would you think of that?”

I sighed and plopped down on a stool. “It would get frustrating after a while, and lead to misunderstandings.”

“You are good at *ich*, and you do well with the uvular r. But you make *nicht* into two syllables. Your German is nasal, and your butchering of the umlauts changes the meaning of words. You will probably always have an accent, and make the occasional mistake in word order. But with my

help, Germans will be able to understand you—" the corner of his mouth turned up— "and not just your fellow American students, who make the same mistakes."

My German teacher was impressed. I kept a German/English dictionary in my pocket, but used it less and less often.

Because of school and the need for food, I could only work for *Herr Doktor* a few hours a night. Yet he was constantly driven, while still fitting in a daily "constitutional" and weight-lifting. Did he remember to sleep? His hair slipped out of its pomade mooring more often, from his hand constantly running through it while concentrating; I didn't mind, of course. But what was he doing all day?

Apparently he was too busy reading to keep things in their usual order. While cleaning, I often found piles of books and papers in the living room. He forbade me to put things away, so I just straightened the piles. Newspaper and magazine clippings, prints from microfiche records from the library, physics books. Once, as he sat in the room reading the newspaper, I said,

"Oh, Einstein—and in the original German! Is he your idol?"

He looked at me blankly for a moment. "I don't worship him. But yes, I can not only read the works that I already know, but also the ones that he wrote after 1942. In my time, his work is denounced as part of a Jewish plot to destroy civilization. My assistants have been deplorably ignorant because of this, which hinders my work considerably. It is wonderful to be in your time."

I put down my dustrag and stood in front of him, hands on hips. "So why ever leave, then? You already know that Germany lost the war. I've told you about Germany's *Wirtschaftswunder*, the economic miracle after the war. The people do everything they can not to let the same things happen again. Europe is united, and now Germany is no longer split into democracy and communism. And the old Nazi regime is all gone. It'll all work out without your help."

"All gone?" He rubbed his chin.

“Well, most of them.” My lip curled. “Europe put them on trial, and they got what they deserved.”

His eyebrows flicked down for a nanosecond. “Yes....*Ja, sehr gut.*”

I smirked. “Of course, you could always do what everybody says they’d do, and go back and kill Hitler as a baby. Then it never would’ve happened.” I sat down on the other armchair.

He folded his hands together with the index fingers pressed against his mouth, his eyebrows drawn together and his eyes pointing upward.

“No, no, aside from the horror that one kills an innocent baby, it would be useless: To truly eliminate Hitler, you must eliminate what gave rise to Hitler. The Nazi Party and numerous such organizations existed without him; the economic conditions, the reparations, the German feeling that we received too much blame for the war.... You’d have to change the decisions of men who decided the fate of Germany during the Weimar Republic. Perhaps without him, someone else would rise to take his place, possibly even worse—someone who would win the war.”

I leaned forward. “But wasn’t he unique in how he could inspire the people to follow him?”

“He was a genius, yes, but was he the only one in all of Germany who could have led such a revolution? Perhaps the various nationalist organizations would have merged and become a formidable force, especially in a time of such desperation. This was, in fact, considered in the early days, because some Party members already saw Hitler as too tyrannical.”

My eyebrows shot up. “Even in his own party?”

“Yes. But he was too shrewd for them, and quickly regained control. I have also learned how the War against Hitler caused Europe to come together, to proclaim that the killing of civilians is a war crime, and to put a stop to wars between European nations. Would your UN exist if not for the Second World War?”

I thought for a second. “Come to think of it, even the Doctor didn’t kill the baby Daleks, because old enemies united to stop them.”

Yep, I’m a total geek.

“What are Daleks?”

I chuckled. “Pepperpot robot Nazis. I’ll have to show you later.”

I jumped up to finish my work. *Herr Doktor* sat quietly for a bit as I straightened the piles, back in his “thinking” posture from before. Then he said,

“Is it even possible to change history? Is time malleable, or is it fixed, like fate? Perhaps one changes nothing by a time journey, because the visit is already part of one’s history before one builds the time machine.”

“I hope it’s fixed. Otherwise, time travelers would cause all sorts of paradoxes and trouble, like the Butterfly Effect.”

“Yes....I must search for the answer, sort this out.”

“Why, so you don’t screw something up in your travels?”

“*Ja, natürlich!* Should I even continue to work on my *Zeitkarte*? If I use it again, what if I end up in the time of the dinosaurs, and cannot find the way back home? This is a good time, and I must not leave it.”

“Right!” I simpered. “Besides, you wouldn’t want to leave me behind, would you?” Just a silly, flirty comment that I regretted as soon as I said it.

He turned to me, his eyebrows raised. I flushed. But he said,

“I wouldn’t leave you behind. With your degree, you will be especially valuable to me. Your intelligence, your learning, your language aptitude, they are just what I need.”

My eyes widened; my embarrassment vanished. Did he just offer me a permanent position as his assistant after graduation? And me only a sophomore! I dropped my dustring. “That would be awesome!”

“But if I can make my *Zeitkarte* more stable, I can gather valuable information about history, evolution, and things that without my *Zeitkarte*, no one can know with certainty.”

“Yes! Or—no. Hm. I don’t know.”

“This I must discover, before I go anywhere.”

I sat down again. “Yes, of course. But don’t you miss your family and friends? Do you have a wife, children?”

A shade seemed to drop over his face. “No wife. I had one, but...she...died.”

My volume dropped to match his. “I’m sorry. How sad. Was she very young?”

“Yes, far too young. I have no children.” He looked down.

"Was it recent? For you, I mean?"

"No-No, it happened a year and a half ago." He turned away, his chin resting on his hand.

I took the hint to stop talking, and soon went back to dusting the room. He watched me as I moved around. Then he asked me, his voice deep and sonorous, giving me a thrill just to hear it:

"How about you—your family, parents, siblings?"

"My parents live on the south side of town. Dad is a chemist, and Mom is a bank manager. I have one younger sister and two brothers; both brothers were in the Gulf War. We were scared for them, but turns out very few of our troops got killed. My brothers told us the Iraqi soldiers just came up to them and surrendered. They didn't want to fight."

His voice, like mine, regained its former casual tone. "Didn't want to fight? What a thought! And you—What if you meet a man? A pretty girl like you will surely have many suitors before you graduate. Won't you want to settle down and no longer work for me?"

Did he just wink at me?

I smiled. "Oh, don't worry about that: I'm a girl of the 90s. I love physics and all things science. Before you came along, I wanted to work for NASA, like I've told you. My plans have room for a husband and family, because of course I want that. But I'd never give up working for good."

"What a concept! But what if your husband wants you to give it up?"

I put my fists on my hips, dust rag trailing from my hand. "I'd refuse."

His eyes widened. "You wouldn't obey your husband?"

My voice rose. "I obey no man!"

"What an age! And despite your knowledge of science, you know nothing of my work in time travel?"

"Nope, nothing. I'm sure it would've been mentioned by somebody. Maybe you don't go back home, but stay here with m—" I pretended to cough as I realized what I was about to say—"in this time."

"But that would suggest that I never repair the *Zeitkarte*. That is not a good thought."

"Or maybe you wait till now to introduce it to the world. I don't know."

He fetched drinks for us both, and smiled, lighting up his handsome face. "Sit down, please, and we will chat. There are many things I do not understand about your time. For example, I have seen other girls your age around town. Your clothing does not reveal so much."

I sat down, setting the dustrag on a table, and he caught and held my gaze. "Yeah, I know. That's my fundamentalist Christian upbringing. My parents aren't totally old-fashioned: I'm pretty sure my mom is the real boss of the house, and we're okay with women working. My church has let up on its rules over the years. We can wear pants, change a tire on Sunday, or go to an amusement park. I could wear makeup or cut my hair if I wanted to. They just started letting us go to movies and dance, and adults can have alcohol now, but we still can't smoke or gamble or shop on Sunday. We can't spend money on anything but tithes when we're inside the church building, because that's making the temple into a den of thieves—so whenever a musician or evangelist comes through, he has to ask for 'donations' for his books or CDs out in the foyer."

"But you do not follow this now?"

"College has opened the world to me. I mean, yeah, sure I knew plenty of people growing up who weren't Christians, or who weren't as strict of ones, but I was still living under my parents' roof. I guess I'm a good Christian girl, but how many of these rules are necessary?"

The corner of his mouth turned up. "I also grew up with strict morality. Caning kept us in line."

I made a wry face. "Dang—and I thought paddling was bad. Now, when I was little, we heard about backmasking, that Satan was putting messages on rock records if you played them backwards. I listened to pop for a while when I was a kid, but then the preacher at church camp said rock music was of the Devil, so I stopped."

He wrinkled his nose a little. "Rock music might as well be *des Teufels*."

I grinned. "You old fogey. If you want to fit in with other people your age in this time, they like rock music. They were the first generation to hear it since they were babies."

He waved his hand. “*Ach*, I prefer Wagner. Now he is a good German composer. So you believed the preacher without question?”

“Of course. If an adult said it, it must be true, right? I thought I should stand up for Christ and against the world by resisting rock even in the face of persecution from my classmates. Heck, some youth pastors tell the kids that even Christian rock is of the Devil.”

“So what did you listen to instead?”

“Well, first I looked for the Inspirational Christian station my dad listened to. But instead I found a Contemporary Christian one. We have this preacher called Lester Sumrall who runs that and a TV station. I liked the music there a lot better, because there was more pop, but he refused to allow music that got ‘too rock-and-rolls’y.’ Really, that’s what one of the DJ’s told me. I called up to request a song and he told me they weren’t allowed to play it anymore. But rock musicians do, like, one or two ballads to make it onto Contemporary radio, so I’d buy an album and discover good music that way.”

I took a sip from my glass, and he sipped his wine.

“So why do you listen to those horrid bands instead?”

“College, of course. I got out from under my parents’ roof and got exposed to other kinds of music. I made new friends from around the world, and Chicago friends who take me to clubs. I also get MTV. I hear grunge, hard rock, industrial, techno.”

“Do you still listen to this Christian rock?”

“Oh, yeah, there are a bunch of good bands I still like to listen to.”

His eyes crinkled. I looked deep into them, admiring them.

He said, “So things have not changed quite as much as I thought. I grew up in a strict church as well. After the end of the Great War, young people wanted to do other things instead of church, to forget the horrors of trench battles—while preachers wanted us to leave the godless entertainment of urban life and turn back to the simple, godly life of the farms. Junkers are patrons of their village churches, and heirs of the Great Awakening of the eighteenth century.”

I got excited. “Ooh, the Great Awakening!”

He cocked an eyebrow. “You’ve heard of it?”

"I read about it in high school, a unit on Puritan literature. I'm also in this Christian club on campus; one of my friends brought a book about the Awakening. They were born-again Christians. They read their Bibles, prayed, tried to actually live the faith."

"So this still appeals to you?"

"Yeah. I may think some of the rules are stupid, but I still believe in holy living." Not just that, but God would let me date *Doktor* Bismarck. St. Paul said Christians have to marry Christians, you see. But I wouldn't say that to *Herr Doktor*, of course.

"You will not rebel against holy living now that you do not live with your parents?"

"No. I don't believe rock music is *des Teufels*, but I don't want to disappoint God by going wild."

"That is refreshing in a young person."

"We have some things in common, then. You don't seem so strict."

"I'm not. Just as you did, I began to question the restrictions at university, and after the War."

"I also heard that Dungeons and Dragons is demonic, but in college, I met some people who play it, and it's nothing like what I was told. So I played that for a while, except now I have to work for you." I smiled at him. "I got to be a twentieth-level half-elf mage named Phoena, before she had to go on a spiritual sabbatical."

"Please, I have no idea what that means. Are there any restrictions with which you agree?"

I bent forward, resting my elbow on the chair arm and my face on my hand. "Well—Some rules are okay, like no smoking or the ways I see people dance at school or in the Chicago clubs. I don't want to 'freak' anybody. I also believe in modesty, more than others do, I think."

He bent forward and rested his face on his hand, gazing into my eyes with a smile. "Are you then more modest than necessary?"

"Yeah. And I think I know why."

"Why is that?"

I fell silent.

His voice went deeper; he dipped his forehead a little so he looked up into my eyes. "You can trust me."

"I don't know—I never even told my mom about this—"

"I will not tell." He smiled. "I have such memories as well, embarrassing things that I do not like to tell."

I smiled back. I felt safe telling him anything. "I do wear dresses to church, but I don't like to wear them any other time, except when I have to. I used to love wearing them when I was little, and wore them all the time. But then one day in Kindergarten, as I walked home from school, a couple of little boys started lifting my skirt to look underneath. After that, I told my mom I only wanted to wear pants to school. She had no idea why I changed my mind so suddenly, because I never told her. The other reason is I hate how cold it gets in wintertime, or trying to keep my skirt from flying up in the wind. That's supposed to be more modest than pants?"

He chuckled. "You are already lovely, but well-designed clothing would do wonders—and without to sacrifice modesty. Though I'm glad to hear that you follow the old ways. There was so much decadence in Berlin. It distressed *meine liebe* Klara so much. And my brother Friedrich was immersed in it." He glanced at the clock. "*Ach du meine Güte*, it grows late. I must bring you home."

We said warm, happy, laughing good-byes as he dropped me off. Something about that night made it almost impossible to sleep. I could barely get through my classes and homework the next day without thinking of him and longing to be with him. Every day got like this, like I was addicted to him and could tell him my deepest, darkest secrets.

And yet he did nothing I could consider "flirting." Every night, after working in the lab led to more discussions, I went home and wondered what the heck was going on here. Every day I looked forward to finding out, finally.

Except that—ew, he's old and shouldn't be going after young girls like me. He'll probably turn gray soon and need adult diapers....Yeah, that's what I'm supposed to think, but all I want is him to think of me as a woman. I feel so

frickin' young, like a little child, like he sees me in more of a fatherly or mentorly way. But I could've sworn I've seen him look at me differently....

In the meantime, I started wearing nicer blouses to work than the usual T-shirt: something a little more stylish, less “college couture” (sweatshirts), maybe a closed or open vest over my blouse.

I even let my necklines dip a little. Something about *Herr Doktor* made me want to show him more skin than I did the guys at school. Maybe it was because he tended to brood and ignore my figure, while guys my age are often horny dogs who like to yell out crass comments as you walk down the street.

Still, he must have noticed at least once in a while: He told me I looked much nicer and should dress that way more often. Which I could do, with the wages he paid me.

Heinrich

I believe I have successfully gained the trust of *Fräulein* Rush. I know the tricks, but I also truly care for her, so it was easy. I would rather use no tricks, but her loyalty is vital to the success of my project. Now for one more trick, then I will need only to refresh it once in a while, by which I look into her eyes and speak in a deep voice.

Now if only it weren't so easy to get lost in her blue-green eyes. I must not give in to temptation. It is so easy to touch her hand, as well, now that I grow increasingly familiar with her. I do it without that I think. Her hand feels so soft and warm, that I want to press it against my lips.

But I must not. I think little of men who dally with their servants or secretaries, and she is far too young.