

Milledufleur of the Mossad

By John J. Moroney

Read before The Chicago Literary Club

October 17, 2011

© 2011 by John J. Moroney. All rights reserved.

Chapter Six

The Arrangement

She sat at her desk reading papers her students had turned in for an assignment she had given them three weeks earlier: to argue whether or not Stanley Lane-Poole's 1898 publication "Saladin" (el-Melik en Nasir Salah-ed-din Yusuf ibn Ayyub) was relevant to the current situation in the Middle East. She smiled to herself; she was now through more than half of the papers and had determined there was a pattern to the essays.

Her class of twenty-four was composed of six Jews, five Arabs, three Americans, and the balance, Britons. To a person, the Jews dealt harshly with Saladin's embrace of Jihad. They suggested a relationship between that act and the Arab world's violent opposition to the existence of an Israeli state in what the Arabs considered Arab land, Palestine. Most of these students also alluded to the rise of the Islamic Brotherhood in Egypt as a direct result of the belief in Jihad. The position of the Arab students was generally that Saladin was a magnificent warrior who was munificent in victory, as he had demonstrated by his treatment of the citizens of Jerusalem in his conquest of that Christian Kingdom. *This all in the fine tradition of Arab behavior*, Milly noted wryly to herself. Although he was a devout Muslim, Saladin was not an Arab; he was a Kurd. The Britons in the class, on the other hand, were united in the opinion that Saladin was a military genius, and they saw no relationship between the glory and ability of Saladin and the inept performance of the Arab nations' military in modern times.

These varied positions did not surprise Milly. In fact, she herself had some sympathy with the Jewish perspective, but not much; philosophically she was closer to the position of the Britons. Though she technically was a Jewess, she felt no emotional bond with Israel or Jews, either as a race or religion. She was a devoted Anglophile; she considered herself English and a British subject. Period.

Milly did not care what her students' leanings were; she was only interested in the logic of their analysis and in their ability to elucidate their arguments in the English language. She was fluent in the languages of the Middle East, could read Aramaic, and was an expert in her field. No less a personage than Bernard Lewis had assured her that she was one of the most qualified experts in the history of the Middle East, past and present. She was Milledufleur Rose, English, hedonistic, and a superb academic. She had only two passions in her life: her work, and her pursuit of gratification. She was a confirmed atheist and worshipped only at the altar of pleasure – her pleasure. Nothing else interested her. Right now, she wanted to finish the papers before five o'clock. It was Friday, and she was eagerly anticipating an evening at her favorite club, the *Ménage a Trois*. There would be a fresh quarry of visiting businessmen tonight.

Involuntary visions of the evening's pursuits brought her tingles of pleasure. She quickly forced her mind back to the task at hand; there would be time enough later to plot out her approach.

The phone rang just as she finished evaluating and grading the last paper. She allowed it to ring several times, while she put the papers aside before picking up the receiver. “Allo,” she said harshly, annoyed at the interruption.

“Miss Rose?” The male voice was unfamiliar.

“Yes. And who might you be?” she uttered flatly.

“Oh, I am sorry, Miss Rose. Pardon my lapse of decorum,” the caller intoned in a very proper British public-school accent. “This is Kim David. Given your profession, I believe you may know of me.”

“If you are the Kim David who is the purported Number Two at the Mossad, then I have heard of you. Might you be that Kim David?”

After pausing a moment, obviously for effect, he responded with emphasis, “I am that Kim David.”

“If you are that Kim David, then you can tell me: who is the Mossad Director General and your direct superior?”

“Miss Rose, as you – and countless others, also – know, Yitzhak Hofi is the head of the Mossad. And, if you are trying to determine my veracity, I am certain I can offer a better way.”

“And what might this ‘better way’ be?”

“Meet me tonight at, say, the *Ménage a Trois*, about eight. You most likely have seen photos of me, and, if not, I am prepared to offer other proof when we meet tonight. I have some serious matters I would like to discuss with you. So, shall we say we have a date?”

Milly was anxious. *Why does he want to meet with me?* she wondered. *And does he know that the Ménage is one of my places? Of course he does! It is evident,* she thought. *He is a spy. They are very thorough.* “Mr. David, I will be at the *Ménage* tonight about eight. I assume you will recognize me.”

“Then it’s a date. I’ll be there early and save a table. It will be at the back, away from the bandstand.” The phone went dead.

Well, she thought, he gets right to the point. He's efficient. She checked the time. *I'll have to hurry and finish here, then get back to my flat so I can change into something appropriate for my adventure.* She did know what David looked like, and if he was as handsome in person as in photographs, then who knows, maybe . . . ? As far as she knew she had never had sex with a spy, and the more she thought about this unlikely encounter the more excited she became. She made short work of clearing her desk, bounced out of her office, and hailed a taxi. There was work to do.

As soon as he cradled the phone, David picked up the file labeled "Milledufleur Rose" he had been reviewing. It was a short walk from the Connaught Hotel to their meeting place, so he went through the file one more time. He wondered if she had any inkling of what they knew about her or any idea what he wanted from her. He felt she would run the options in the hours before their meet, and he concluded that she would not be shocked by his proposition. She was, after all, very, very bright.

Milly was putting on the finishing touches of her makeup and preening in front of the full length mirror. She smiled at her reflection as she smoothed the black cocktail dress, running her hands over her well-shaped body. Two thin black straps supported the bodice which left little to the imagination, and her black hair was pulled up and fastened with a simple clip adorned with six diamonds. Milly knew that her olive complexion was enhanced by her black hair and the black dress. She turned from one side to the other and uttered approvingly to herself "Not bad." She

was ready. She pulled on white silken gloves before opening the door to her flat. She was eagerly anticipated the evening. *Who knows where it will go*, she thought. She also thought that she did have some ideas.

David sat at the desk in his hotel room and browsed through the file on Milledufleur Rose compiled by Mossad field agents in London. The file had been opened the summer of 1970 at Kim David's request. The Mossad had been aware of Milledufleur from even before her birth. Milledufleur's father was Michael Ronne-Lotz and her mother was Yolande Sabbaagh, and they had both been Mossad agents. They had met and had a very brief love affair, which had resulted in Yolande's pregnancy, when they were both operatives in Egypt. David remembered the concern this had caused in the Mossad. Ronne-Lotz was a top operative in Egypt, as was Yolande. The complication was that Ronne-Lotz had a wife in Tel Aviv in the then-new nation of Israel. Yolande had been thrice-married, but had been widowed a year earlier. When he had learned of the pregnancy Ronne-Lotz refused to leave his wife, and had demanded Yolande have an abortion. She had refused, and had fled to London where her mother lived. Her mother, Rachel Gheriani, had moved to London from Cairo in 1932 after her husband, Elie Gheriani, had died. There she'd met and married John Rose, a socially prominent and wealthy dentist. Yolande had died in childbirth, leaving Milledufleur an orphan, and, technically, a bastard. Rachel Rose had persuaded John Rose to adopt Milledufleur, and he had readily assented, to appease his much younger and sultry wife.

Kim David knew Michael Ronne-Lotz and was aware of his refusal to take any responsibility for Yolande's condition, and, indeed, that Ronne-Lotz had confided to David and others in the Mossad that he felt he was probably not the father. It was true that Yolande had many sexual encounters in the course of her spying for Israel, but most who knew the story were of the opinion that Ronne-Lotz was indeed the father. However, the Mossad had decided not to take any action against him as he was of critical importance to their network. This was a decision which later proved fortunate; his contribution to Israel's knowledge of the Egyptian Air Force was critical to Israel's success in the 1967 Arab War.

Rachel Rose despised Ronne-Lotz. Milledufleur knew nothing of her father until she was sixteen, and from the moment she had learned the story of her birth – from her grandmother – Milledufleur had shared her grandmother's venom. According to the report, she refused to acknowledge any relationship to her father. The knowledge, however, did shape Milledufleur's life. She had developed a cold personality that, along with other characteristics, including her sexual behavior, had resulted in, among other things, an inability to form committed close personal relationships – in particular, with men. The report went into detail about her sexual escapades, as well as her significant academic success. She had become one of the foremost experts in Middle East affairs.

David knew the survival of Israel depended in large measure on the success of Israel's spies and their recruitment was one of his highest priorities, especially the recruitment of women. He knew he was the best recruiter – an opinion shared by most – and he felt confident that Milledufleur

Rose could become one of their best. It would be a significant challenge but he had supreme confidence in his abilities, especially with women.

He paused to look at the many photos of Milledufleur Rose. *What a beauty!* There was no doubt in his mind she was the product of a father who was half Dane and half German Jew. Her mother was a Turkish-Circassian Jew, raised in Egypt. David lingered over the photos of Milledufleur playing tennis; they revealed a superb body toned by vigorous exercise. He smiled as he thought of the job at hand.

He was comfortable at the Connaught Hotel, particularly the attic on the top floor. He loved the spacious high-ceiling room. It gave him plenty of pacing territory to aid in his thought processes. He was now looking out over Grosvenor Square, the Eisenhower Memorial, and both the American and Canadian Embassies as he mentally went through the argument he had prepared for the recruitment of Milly.

He felt the dining room at the Connaught would provide an excellent environment for his recruiting pitch. After giving her some of his personal history as well as the mission of the Mossad, he would suggest they have dinner at the Connaught. In that environment he would advance his closing argument. He didn't anticipate he would close her with one meeting; that was why he had booked the hotel for three nights. He felt, however, he would have an excellent

sense of success by the end of the evening, no matter what time that might be. He was confident, and he was eager to begin. *Well*, he thought, *it is time to arrange my wardrobe.*

She was greeted at the door by the Maitre d', obsequious as usual. "Miss Rose. Welcome back to the Ménage, you are as lovely as ever."

She gave him a condescending smile. "Why, that is good to hear Arnod." *Or whatever your name might be, you goose*, she thought.

"Miss Rose, there is a gentleman waiting for you; he did not give his name, but he has taken a table at the back. Let me escort you," he finished with an exaggerated bow.

As was usual at the Ménage, the lighting was dim and the pervading odor was of oriental spices, with a hint of myrrh the most prominent. As the owner of the club intended, the lighting, aroma, and strobe effect reflecting from the revolving crystal chandeliers combined to produce a clearly sensual atmosphere; as many times as she had been there each new visit pricked her sense of arousal anew.

As they neared his table she was able to bring into focus the details of Kim David's countenance, and as he rose at her approach she stopped, about three paces in front of him. With only a nod of

acknowledgment, Milledufleur Rose silently studied Kim David thoroughly. What she observed was a trim man who stood almost a hand taller than her 5 feet 9 inches, with light brown hair neatly parted to the left, and eyes of sky blue. *So much for the typical Jewish look*, she thought. He wore a light-grey sharkskin silk-and-wool-combination three-piece suit: suppressed-waist jacket with classic-width lapels, vest squared-off at the waist, and pleated pants – integral waist, no cuffs. The suit draped very well. *Tailored by Bironi*, she thought approvingly. The shirt was a soft-white, with a straight collar accenting his height, and he wore a pearl-grey tie with four-in-hand knot. His shoes were Allen Edmonds black slip-ons, no tassels. His neatly-trimmed mustache added to his continental appearance. *He could be an advertisement for Savile Row.*

Kim David stood silent, hands in his pockets, while Milledufleur completed her appraisal. His eyes remained on her face. He watched only her eyes. A tiny smile briefly lifted the left side of his mouth, but disappeared just before she raised her eyes back to his. He then smiled fully at her, revealing a perfect set of teeth, and nodded to welcome her. *Much better than his black and white photographs*, she thought. *He is electric!*

She closed the three paces and proffered her hand in such a manner that only a boor could resist taking it into his and greeting it with a kiss. Kim David was not a boor. As he applied his lips to her silken glove, his eyes smiled at her as she formally introduced herself: “Milledufleur Rose, Mr. David . . . and I do hope it will be my pleasure.” She held his eyes as if she was searching for a glimpse of his soul. He continued to hold her hand.

“Miss Rose. We meet at last.”

He directed her to a place on the paisley settee, next to where he had been seated before he'd risen to greet her. They sat, and she very carefully smoothed her black dress so as to expose a portion of her legs above the knee.

She smiled into his eyes. “You say that as if it was inevitable that we were to meet. Like kismet.”

“Perhaps it is kismet; we shall see.” He smiled and tilted his head. “Thank you for meeting me tonight, on such short notice.”

“Not a problem. As I am certain you well know, I was coming here anyway. As you also know, my Fridays are special to me. So, please get to the point. What do you want with me?”

She is spectacular, he thought. *She has animal magnetism!* What struck him especially, however, was the coldness of her dark eyes. She could smile with her lips, but her eyes were flat. Was it hate he saw, or was it contempt? Maybe it was both. She was beautiful, sensual, distant, and almost frightening at the same time. *She will be perfect*, he thought. “Could I interest you in a drink? It would give us a chance to relax and get to know each other better.”

“I am sure you know what I drink; that is also covered in your brief, isn’t it?” She took a pack of Players from her petite black bag and slowly tapped one out, put it between her lips, and lit it with a match. For an instant the smell of sulfur invaded the pleasant odor of the club. She tilted her head and exhaled the smoke upward to escape to the ceiling. The smoke wafted as a cloud toward the heavens. She stared at him as if to say “So, what is it?”

David motioned to the waiter hovering nearby. “A G&T for the lady, Bombay Sapphire, and I’ll have a whiskey, Oban, neat.” The waiter acknowledged and was quickly off to fetch the drinks. The noise level of the Ménage was rapidly increasing as more and more of the denizens of the club made their way inside. Most of the new arrivals, male and female alike, came as singles; women in cocktail dresses with plunging necklines and men dressed in conservative business suits were the order of the day. An occasional couple wandered in, but they were clearly the exception.

“So, you do have a file on me. What else do you know about me?”

“Everything and nothing. We know what you do and what you’ve done; about your motivations, we can only speculate.” He smiled as he directed her smoke away from his face. “Although I believe I have a fair notion.”

“So, you know everything and nothing about me, and I know who you are and I know of the agency you are with. I do not know exactly how spies operate, but I do know some of the gritty results: Like the tracking down and killing of the Palestinians who murdered the Israeli Olympic athletes in Munich in ’72. They found them in Beirut and shot them, one by one. That is what you do, isn’t it? You are assassins, right?”

David paused as the waiter brought their drinks. The noise level, to his satisfaction, was steadily increasing. He took his glass and raised it to hers.

“Cheers. Here is to a long relationship.”

She stared coolly into his eyes. *So, they want me to do something for them, she thought. How preposterous!* She felt Kim David was an extremely attractive and urbane man. If he didn’t have an agenda and she’d met him only by chance . . . ! Well, he was better than the majority of her conquests. She sipped her drink, then smiled. “Care to dance?”

The band was playing a muted version of Cole Porter’s “Night and Day.” He smiled, took her hand, and led her to the dance floor. He pulled her close and they blended together. They began to move to the music and glide across the floor, and for a few moments they seemed oblivious to everything except the merging of their bodies.

She lightly touched his ear with her tongue as she whispered. “You are a lovely dancer, Mr. David.”

He shuddered involuntarily at the touch of her moist tongue and trembled as she pressed closer. She was overwhelmingly sensual, and for a few moments he forgot what he was here to do.

“Miss Rose, you are thoroughly captivating!”

With increasing intensity they slowly explored the crevices of their bodies as they danced; only their clothing stood in the way.

When the music ended, they were oblivious to the eyes upon them as he led her back to the table. They remained silent as they sat, and he kept squeezing her leg gently with his hand as he gazed into her eyes. She rubbed his other hand with both of hers. Finally, he slowly edged away.

“Milly, I have a proposal to make to you. But, before I do, I would like to put the proposal into some perspective, and this simply is not a place we can talk. I suggest we talk over dinner. The Connaught has a wonderful dining room, and it has an exquisite chef and an excellent wine list. I

have booked a table in a quiet nook that will allow us to converse privately. I hope you will accept.”

She parted her lips then lingered for a moment, before she replied, “You are a seducer Mr. Kim David.”

***** ***** ***** ***** *****

He’d spent half of his life flying from one time zone to another, and he had largely overcome jet lag by diligent application of commonsense precautions: sparse consumption of alcohol, lots of water, regular exercise. This morning Kim easily woke before 6 a.m. GMT, but instead of opening his eyes he lay still, thinking, remembering. He knew she wasn’t in the bed; he’d heard her leave shortly before one a.m. She wasn’t in the bed, but her scent was; it floated in his hotel room. He couldn’t identify the perfume by brand, but he did recognize the aroma she wore: a heavy, musky fragrance which complemented her appearance. As he’d known she would, she had gotten ready to leave quietly. He hadn’t wanted to break the mood that had prevailed throughout the evening, so he had feigned sleep as she’d slipped out of his room. Now, even though she was no longer there, he could still feel her presence, as well as smell it.

She was excitable. She was very physical. She was also very unusual. He hadn’t known what to expect, but what had transpired had surprised him. He was overwhelmed by the ferocity of her lovemaking. She had become trance-like during the encounter, and she had screamed her way

into the orgasm, which she had induced with her own fingers after Kim had, reluctantly, released in a wave of spasmodic relief.

When he'd questioned her about her postcoital masturbation, she informed him it was the only way she could climax. When he'd asked the obvious follow up question, "Why go through the preliminaries then; why not just go for it?" she'd smiled as she told him that without the penetration she could not bring herself to orgasm. Watching her do this to herself had excited him to the point where he'd needed to take her once again, which he did with a passion he had never before experienced.

He rose and donned the white terrycloth robe provided by the Connaught. He rang room service for coffee, then picked up the note addressed to him on the desk. He wondered when she'd written it. *She must have night vision*, he mused. He opened the note and read:

My Dear Kim,

You are a delicious man – but you already know that! The drinks, dancing and dinner were only surpassed by what topped off the evening.

Your arguments as to why I should align myself with the agency you so ably represent were not without effect. Your sense of history and your logic made an impression and have me leaning towards accepting your offer. I agree that the Arab argument depicting the Palestinians as victims of a cruel West exploiting the

Palestinians, especially the Muslim Palestinians, is historically specious. As we agree, the historical reality is that the Islamic world was built by war and blood as it destroyed the existing Christian civilization. After the seventh century when Mohammed and the Arabs came roaring out of the desert bent on jihad, it was the Greco-Christian empire that stood in its way until it was destroyed by the Turkish-Muslim empire.

The anti-Israeli arguments are fallacious in their attempt to define a geographical and historical moral superiority of people called Palestinians in a geographical area that had been named Palestine by the conquering Romans to the right to the land itself. There never was a state or government of Palestine; Palestine was simply the name given to that sector of the Roman Empire. Following the Romans, that area called Palestine was populated by various ethnic peoples who have shared the land, and Israelites – descendants of the Hebrew patriarch Jacob, who were native to or inhabitants of the ancient northern kingdom of Israel – then constituted a good part of the area called Palestine by the Romans, which is now Israel. The Israeli state was created in 1948 by the U.N., and was immediately recognized by President Harry Truman. History has chronicled the various ethnic bodies who have shared this land now called Israel. The Jews have no less a claim, and may even have a superior claim on this land by virtue of history and actuality.

Your most compelling argument, though, concerns the tenuous situation of the Jews in Israel. Since the Jewish state of Judea was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70, Jews have not fared well in diaspora. Without a Jewish state in Israel it is more than probable the Jew may disappear from this world. Israel may not survive, but it does have a chance. And being a part of this effort to survive as a part of Israel does have a sense of excitement that appeals to my competitive nature. I believe I do want to play a role in this adventure.

I look forward to meeting with you this evening; I do have some questions and issues that you may resolve. I suspect the nature of our encounter this evening will be different in tenor from the last.

Till then,

Milly

He'd felt his recruiting pitch last night had gone well, so he was pleased with her note. He had known the challenge and the chance to be a member of a very elite, accomplished group was the hook for Milledufleur Rose, and he knew tonight's meeting would be only a formality. He had landed his target

Tonight she would insist he be her operative, and he could handle that through a series of alternates as needed. He had no illusion that his sexual prowess had anything to do with her

recruitment. According to the report she would have sex with anyone who could mount an attack, but she never had sex with the same person twice. One of her rules. He thought she might have to relent on this rule once she was working for the Mossad, but he didn't anticipate any real problem. She would do what was necessary. He was a bit surprised, however, that she hadn't raised any issue about Ronne-Lotz, her father. That might be broached tonight. If so, he was ready.

He put in a call to let Hofi know he was wrapping up this business tonight; he would be going to Morocco a day earlier than planned. Hofi, who had questioned his ability to recruit Rose.

Another opportunity to rub salt into Hofi's crude ego!

Chapter 7

March 1980

She had been back from her training in Israel for ten weeks now, and was once again fully immersed in her academic life. It was almost as if the twelve months she'd spent courtesy of the Mossad had never occurred. Her cover story for the sabbatical, that she would be staying and working on Kibbutzim in Israel, had been so well played that she was beginning to feel that was actually what she had done, rather than twelve months of grueling training learning how to defend herself and how to kill, and the myriad mundane tasks of how to communicate, exchange information, and understand the maze of the structure called the Mossad. Her body and mind had never before been tested or abused by the elements as they had been during her ordeal in Israel. She had always prided herself on the condition of her body, but after what she had undergone with the Mossad she knew she was now physically and mentally fit for any challenge, and she yearned to take on whatever they might ask of her. She was more than ready.

Milledufleur stood staring out her office window at the lovely green of Russell Square, just across Thornhaugh Street which ran parallel to the building that housed her office. Recently-planted yellow and red tulips defined the perimeter of the square and provided a bright backdrop for the mallards, geese, and swans floating in the blue-grey ponds. *England, so green, so lovely!* she thought. With a soft radiant sky on a clear day it usually filled her with a pleasure unmatched by any other.

Today she was distracted. The news in the Times that morning was not encouraging for the Israelis: the PLO attacking Northern Israel from Southern Lebanon; Syria's move into Northern Lebanon coalescing with PLO elements was a move that had caught the Mossad off guard. She knew that Bashir and Amine Gemayel, the sons of the old Phalange Christian Party leader, had met with Mossad and Aman people aboard a missile boat in the harbor of Jounieh, north of Beirut. The Israelis were not impressed. More Israeli citizens dead, more casualties. *Oh, Israel!* *Oh, Israel!* she lamented.

She wondered if there was a connection between the attacks and Kim David's message that he wanted to see her today. She hadn't seen David since . . . since her seduction. *Or was it his?* she mused. Maybe there wasn't any connection. Maybe he simply wanted to see her – and maybe peace with the Arabs would suddenly break out, and maybe pigs would fly! David's call was not social.

Halfway through her training the Israelis had lost their greatest ally in the region; one month before the signing of the peace treaty with the Egyptians the Shah was deposed and replaced by the Ayatollah Khomeini. Khomeini hated the Jews. He was opposed to the very existence of Israel and was very close to the most radical of Israel's Palestinian enemies. The new regime's Revolutionary Guard had handed over the Israeli Embassy building in Tehran to the PLO, hardly a simple symbolic gesture. The mood in Tel Aviv was that, without the Shah, Iran would aid the PLO. The PLO state in Lebanon had to be neutralized.

She knew the history of the Middle East better than most. It was her profession. She was a professor of Middle Eastern studies at the SOAS College of the University of London. Sykes, Picot, Balfour, Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Bell; these were not just names on a piece of paper, they were the real-life breathing, fornicating, adulterous, scheming, self-righteous people who were the creators of the existing morass called the Middle East. She took no moral stand about the right or wrong of the historical issues surrounding the Middle East and Israel. She concerned herself with the issues and the behavior, not their morality, and of one thing she was certain: Israel's survival was not pre-destined. She believed all human activity was self-serving, or, at least, it was perceived to be even when it was folly. The situation in Lebanon was worse than folly; for Israel it was crucial.

She looked at her Rolex, gold, diamond-studded; thirty minutes before Kim David's arrival. The exquisite *montre* had been a gift from Kim before she'd left for Tel Aviv and the grueling training. The watch was much like Kim: exquisite, and in impeccable taste. *How could an inanimate object take on human-like qualities?* she wondered. *Perhaps it had been produced by artists and artisans who knew innately the traits of the buyer?*

While she waited for Kim's arrival she was entrapped in thoughts, random but still related to Israel. How could Carter, who ostensibly had coerced Begin and Sadat into a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, stand by – even if he did not encourage – and allow the Revolution of the Ayatollahs and the demise of the Shah? Carter was supposed to be a man of religion. Maybe

he equated his Christianity with the radical Islamic fervor of the mullahs. *Not a simple mistake,* she thought, *but a blunder that could approximate the blunders of the Treaty of Versailles.*

Her reverie was interrupted by the ringing of the telephone. “Allo,” she answered.

“Professor Rose, you have a visitor,” said the guard. “He says he has an appointment, but refuses to give me his name or identification.”

She smiled. “Describe him to me. No, wait . . . let me talk to him.”

“Allo,” she said. “If this is who I think it is, tell me: what is my most intriguing physical characteristic?”

“Milly, you bloody well know that I will not repeat that in front of this, hmm . . . gentleman! Just tell him I’m expected!”

In another moment he appeared in front of her opened office door and she rose to meet him midway. She enveloped him with her arms and kissed him incessantly on his cheeks in the French/Arabic way. She stepped back and fiercely gripped his hands in hers as she inspected

every pore of his handsome face and stared deeply into his piercing blue eyes. Except for a hint of gray at his temples, his brown hair appeared the same. His perfectly-trimmed mustache also displayed several grays, and underneath his eyes were slightly darkened circles that weren't there the last time they had met. *This man is weary and stressed*, she thought, *and no wonder!*

“You look fabulous Kim!” she lied, smiling widely and slowly nodding her head for emphasis.

He gave her a tired smile and, not lying, said, “Milly, you are even more enchanting than I remember, but, then, how could such a frail thing as a memory etch your beauty accurately.”

“Kim, you are a bloody diplomat, but even if you are a bit potty, I love it. Keep the charm-offensive coming; who knows what else could come of it!” she leered naughtily.

“What! Is Mademoiselle Glace – that’s what they call you in Tel Aviv, my dear – beginning to melt? Are you teasing me with the chance you will revoke your once, and once only, rule?”

“My dear Kim, I can’t believe they called me Miss Ice, *quel dommage Monsieur!* What else did they say about me?” she purred.

“You know perfectly well what they’ve said about you; it’s all in the evaluation report. And you bloody well know your evaluation was more than a bit above top notch: ‘The potential to become one of our best field agents . . . Ice water runs in her veins . . . she would easily cut the throat of her mother if needed.’ You were very impressive, Miss Rose, and you know it!”

She smiled and led him to a blue paisley print chesterfield at the center of her office and motioned for him to sit. She then took the wingback chair adjacent and crossed her legs. With a motion of modesty she smoothed her brown herringbone shirt. “Something to drink?” she inquired.

“Only if it’s whiskey; but I suppose the dons frown on that?”

“You silly, you know the dons would never frown on alcohol; it’s the lifeblood of the bloody academic life, as they say. What will it be then, a blend or single malt?”

He brightened. “A single malt, three fingers.”

“One single malt, coming up!”

She rose and went to the wet bar on the other side of her office. *Poor man*, she thought. *The political infighting must be taking its toll. On top of the current crisis, that fucking crude boor, Hofi, must be giving Kim his backside. Well, the only thing the bureaucrats are united on is the survival of Israel, not the survival of their rivals.* Survival of the fittest was the self-proclaimed ethic of the agency; there was not an inch of wiggle room surrounded by enemies who had never hesitated in their quest to kill each and every one. Hofi was a boor, but he was also a vicious animal who would do anything to anyone who would harm Israel. Kim was no boor and far from crude, but he could be just as vicious. Sharon and the P.M. knew this and gave it food to fester.

She poured three fingers of whiskey, and took a small glass of sherry for herself. She placed the amber fluid in front of him and steadied herself on his shoulder, applying a slight pressure with her hand as she slid into her chair. They touched glasses in a “Cheers.” Although their time together had been brief, she felt exhilarated to be next to him. She watched him as, with eyes closed, he slowly took a long swallow of the whiskey. He sighed, then opened his eyes and edged closer as if to say it was time to get down to business.

Kim reached down and retrieved his tan weather-beaten briefcase. Unzipping the case he removed a dossier, the standard issue of the agency, dull gray, and placed it on the table in front of him. The affixed label had a single word typed on it: “CAHILL”.

“Milly, as you probably have guessed, this is not a social call. I could have had someone else from the agency, or even the ministry, meet with you, but this is your first assignment as a *katsha* and you are my contribution; I feel a bit like your mentor.” He raised his hand so as to stay her response; he didn’t want a dialogue, at least not yet. He needed to give her instructions for her first, and, he hoped, not her last, agency mission.

“This file contains the background and the internal psychological draw up of an American with whom we want you to form a connection. The initial contact has already been arranged and will be very easy. He will be in your BCIU class here for one week. You will have him for three hours per day for five days, and during that time you must befriend him and entrap him. You will then use your abundant feminine wiles to convince him to do you a favor; not a big favor exactly, but one that could pose some . . . let’s say, political exposure for him with the Egyptian bureaucracy, and even within his company.”

She took the file proffered to her and began to leaf through the contents. “So, do you want me to ball him, or to kill him?”

“Milly, a little dramatic, what? Of course we don’t want you to kill him! We need him – for a while anyway. If you have to ball him – disgusting term – I don’t think you will have any misgivings about that; you might even find that could be, ah . . . pleasing. He is a youngish chap;

some would find him attractive. But it is a job; a job that we know you can pull off with aplomb.”

“So I am to, as you say, befriend our prize and convince him to do a favor for me. What, exactly, is this favor, and how long do I have to spring the trap on this Yank?”

“He’ll arrive in London the beginning of April, and the first week he’ll spend primarily in the Getty London office meeting staff, the usual rot. He will begin your course the following week; they want to get that out of the way quickly. He’s spent the last three-and-a-half-years in Kuwait including trips all over the Gulf, even to Cairo, so he’s not totally groundless about the Middle East. He just needs, or Getty’s HR think he needs, an orientation course on Egypt.”

She bit playfully on a pencil she had put in her mouth, as if she were contemplating turning the pencil into a gumdrop and slowly sucking the juices from it. “So, it’s Egypt. When?”

“Our guess is he will be in Egypt permanently by the fourth quarter of this year. Before that time, he’ll be traveling there to clean up loose ends with Getty’s concession agreement, so he’ll be back and forth with no discernable pattern. However, he will be here for reasonably lengthy stays and that should give you ample time to play your Cleopatra role.”

“Which is, my dear Kim?”

“He will be responsible for hiring the Egyptian staff, some eighty people all told; you know the lot, accountants, admin types, geologists, geophysicists. You are to convince him to hire your two cousins. They are geologists now in Iraq, but they will be leaving soon, before Saddam attacks Iran – which we believe will be in early September.”

“My cousins? I don’t have any cousins, and, especially, not Egyptian ones! And what’s this about Iraq?”

“Saddam will attack Iran; the nutter’s worried about the even nuttier Shi’a Mullahs. Iran and Iraq having a go at each other will be good for us, and we hope it’s a long, drawn out tie. Kim smiled at her. “And we have made for you two highly-qualified geologist ‘cousins’ that you will convince your dear friend Mr. Cahill to hire.”

Chapter 8

Sometime in late winter 1979

The nondescript room had no windows and was devoid of all accoutrements: no pictures, no paintings, no memorabilia on the walls. It was simply a rectangle twenty feet by twenty feet with a single, steel door in or out. The military-style tables – found in most military and government offices around the world – were steel grey, and abutted each other, with eight same-style chairs four on each side. A serious-looking gathering of humorless men occupied seven of the chairs. All were senior officers of the Israeli Defense Force. Cigarette smoke was thick as a London fog, the aroma a blend of tobaccos from Turkey, France, America – but mostly Turkey – and the decibel level in the room was low. The attendees were in no mood for idle chitchat; they were obviously waiting for someone to take charge.

With an explosive bang, the door sprang open, and the big man strode in armed with files. He stopped before the seated seven and silently searched each individual face before fixing it with a knowing stare and nod of acknowledgement. He knew all of them, and he knew them well. Each had, since young men, served Israel in its skirmishes and wars with foes dedicated to their annihilation. All bore the personal scars of people who'd had brothers, sisters, children, friends, lovers obliterated by the Nazis and the Russians during the Holocaust, then by the Arabs in the

1948 invasion of the Arab nations, and in all of the subsequent wars. Now the Palestinians were increasing their attacks against the citizenry of Israel. These men were comrades-in-arms who had all experienced firsthand the virulence of their enemy. That any of them were still here was a testimony both to their steel and to the unyielding tenacity of the man who had just burst into the room. He'd been a fellow soldier, then a commanding officer, and then their General, before becoming their leader as the Israeli Minister of Defense.

He dropped the files onto the table, pulled out the chair closest to the door and sat. He gazed again into each man's eyes before, finally, sitting back and taking out a pack of Marlboros – his favorite form of tobacco abuse – and ritually pulling a cigarette from the pack. He lit it and inhaled deeply, then exhaled the smoke to mingle with that already hovering above the table. The room was still. They were all familiar with the big man's style. They knew to a man that he was about to inform them of a decision the Defense Minister had made. For the past eighteen months they had all been a part of the operational planning of a possible Israeli offensive, and they all were confident they knew what the decision would be – as well as the risks it entailed.

The big man ran his fingers slowly through his thick graying hair and took a moment to smooth his locks, then very deliberately opened the top file in front of him. He carefully removed the red-bordered document labeled "Top-Secret," closed the file folder, placed the document on top of it, and, keeping his hand on the file slowly turned it on the table.

“Gentlemen. Fellow soldiers. You all know what this is; you have all had a part in its preparation. This is operation ‘Little Pines.’” He paused briefly for effect, then continued, “Later today, at the cabinet meeting in Tel Aviv, I will recommend to the Prime Minister that we implement this plan as soon as practical. I fully expect the Prime Minister will then recommend ‘Little Pines’ be approved by the cabinet, giving the Minister of Defense the authority to commence the invasion of Lebanon in order to eliminate the scourge of the PLO from this earth once and for all.”

The men returned their leader’s stare as they all nodded a universal assent, as if that was why he had called them together. Like any effective leader he had solicited all of their concerns, criticisms, and recommendations, and he had carefully weighed them all before making his decision. Now that the decision had been taken, however, he expected – and would insist – that they, as a man, stand behind it and do all in their power to implement the plan. Any dissident would be expected to leave now.

“Anyone who disagrees, say so now.” They all looked around, but none made any move indicating disagreement. The Minister nodded. “Good. Now, any questions?”

General Narkiss, seated directly in front of the Minister, raised his hand. Narkiss was the oldest officer in the room. He was leading the front lines in the 1948 Arab Israeli war and in the 1967

war, and had lost an arm and had a shattered leg as souvenirs of those conflicts. He was known to be the Minister's mentor and confidante. The big man nodded, "Yes Uzi, your question?"

"When Ari? When do we go?"

"We go as soon as two preconditions are satisfied, and we receive cabinet approval." Low laughter followed his response; they all knew the Minister already had his answer – through back door channels – or he would not be recommending a career-ending plan. Career-ending, that is, if it failed. No one could imagine the Minister spending the rest of his days farming on a kibbutz. Still, they all understood there were risks, big risks, especially if their southern flank should be attacked.

"You all know what the preconditions are and you all understand we cannot, with any precision, put a firm timetable to this business. We must be ready to make the move while the Phalange still have a chance in Lebanon and before the PLO can get many more reinforcements. We think we must be ready to go in early 1982."

"But, what about our northern flank, what about Iraq?" shouted out Colonel Rabin.

“The Mossad are confident that Saddam Hussein will invade Iran in the fall of 1980, perhaps earlier, and our military intelligence confirms that view. Obviously, if this doesn’t happen we will re-think our position. But we must be ready. The scum are killing our people.”

Colonel Habib, the youngest of the men and a veteran of the 1973 War on the front with Egypt, rose. “What about the southern flank? Old Sadat is stewing over his position in the Arab world; Peace Treaty or no, he could attack after we go into Lebanon.”

As he rose to his feet the Minister made what they all knew would be his final comment of the meeting. “Schlomo, the Egyptians will not be a problem.”

“But,” Habib insisted, “Sadat?”

“Schlomo, forget about Sadat.”

The Minister of Defense quit the room as abruptly as he had entered, and lumbered down the hall to his isolated office. His secretary greeted him perfunctorily and handed him a stack of

messages, all labeled “urgent.” He went into his office, closed the door, and took off his jacket. He poured himself a glass of mineral water, wishing it was a far different clear liquid. *Later for that*, he thought. He sat down and lit a Marlboro, then began paging through the messages. He came to one from Kim David and stopped and smiled. *My friend Kim*. No two men could be more opposite, yet he had no doubt Kim David was one of his closest allies. He thought back to their last meeting, only a week earlier.

Kim had just returned from one of his many trips to Morocco and London, and he had left a message for Kim to join him at his farm some twenty kilometers outside of Tel Aviv. The Minister’s wife and family had gone into Tel Aviv to attend a concert, so they would have the place to themselves and time for Kim to bring him up to date. There would be time enough, as well, to enjoy some of the Polish Vodka he knew Kim would bring with him. He heard Kim’s car pull up, and he eagerly walked outside to welcome his friend and instruct the soldiers not to disturb them.

Inside, the Minister ushered Kim into his study and, with a sly grin, inquired if Kim had brought “the usual” with him. “Of course, you transparent old bear; it’s in my briefcase! Shall I pour us a couple of stiff ones before we get down to business?”

The Minister grunted an affirmation. “We who labor so hard for our country need a little relaxation once in awhile, don’t you agree Kim?”

Kim went to the cabinet, a familiar procedure for him, and took two large-diameter, short crystal glasses and poured several fingers of vodka in each. They then sat and went through the brief ritual of each asking the other about the health of their family, before turning to the business of the moment.

“Kim, we must neutralize the Egyptians. Are you confident that your asset in London will be able to pull this off?”

“Ari, my friend, absolutely! And, my asset is not in London right now; she is in Tel Aviv – or, at least, in the environs.”

“What?” exploded Ari. “Tel Aviv! What is she doing in Tel Aviv? We need her in London!”

“Relax, Ari. She will surface back at London University in plenty of time. She is nearly finished with her training compliments of the Mossad, and reports are that ice water runs in her veins. Our target will arrive in London in early 1980, where she will recruit him and do her job. Our people will then finish the job in Egypt.”

“Tell me one more time, Kim, why you have so much confidence in this young woman?”

“Because of her bloodlines, old chap. Her father was Ronne-Lotz and her mother Yolande. Besides, I know her well.”

“Lotz?”

“One and the same.”

“Oy vey! And do you also know this young woman in the biblical sense, you wolf?”

Kim smiled. “It’s all part of the job.”