

THE ACTOR

or

Prudence and the Prurient

BY LLOYD NELSON

The philosophy students at Heidelberg University are a bit nervous about their future. They know that due to coming from prosperous families their military call up will be later rather than sooner and they sort of expect jobs in Berlin, in Military Intelligence and so on. However things are getting a little desperate on the Western Front as the Americans slowly spark up their war effort and juggernaut themselves into this European War. The writing is sort of on the wall and quick call ups and small training now sweeps through this favoured class of students.

Joachim Voight is perhaps lucky in that he doesn't become a grunt soldier but a machine gunner, or rather the assistant to the machine gunner, in a three man squad. In no time at all he learns that the minute the Allied barrage stops you have to hot foot it out to the trench from the deep dugout carrying the machine gun between you, find some sort of a base in the trench the big guns have been pounding the proverbial out, of and site the gun to sweep the waves of British troops who will be floundering. Tripping on the unforgiving coils of barb wire and doing their best to get at you.

It's simple enough, the hordes approach, Erik the Gunner says

"it's just like shooting ducks on a pond"

and they press the double buttons on the Krupp gun and cut swaths through the standing up troops who haven't really a hope of getting to you because of the barbed wire.

"Brrrp, brrrp, brrrp" the gun goes and the targets fall over like nine pins.

"Gawd" Erik says as bodies fall over everywhere. The Staff Officers who plan all this must have two thirds of a brain in their head, looking for the other third.

He looks at Voight, "keep the belts up and stay sharp. The Poms are easy meat; it's the Aussies you have to look out for. They are bloody irrepressible and will bomb you out of a sinecure if you give them a quarter of a chance."

It's all dreadfully bloody and inversely bloody dreadful. The sounds from the wounded is heart wrenching.

"God" says Erik, "the least they can do after this sort of attack is to call a thirty minute halt and shoot the badly wounded."

"That's bad talk" a dark and intense looking Corporal barks at them.

They go to give him the finger but in looking closer at him and noting his iron cross, Erik backs off. "What would you do, Iron Cross Corporal?" he asks.

The Corporal says darkly "I have put my coat on to serve Germany. I will not take it off until we have achieved victory over these capitalistic morons or I shall die in the attempt."

There must be a few Australians in the enemy, a stick grenade, one of ours, ideal for the long throw, sails over and blasts the Corporal over on his back.

He gets up after a while and holding his wounded arm says,

"Die all Englanders and fellow travellers."

"What's your name brave one?" Erik asks.

"Adolf Hitler, runner" he says. "look to your targets, some of them are obviously and unacceptably alive."

Erik swings his gun from side to side and the difficult one departs.

A few days later we get to know that the War (the Great War) is to finish at morning smoko time on November 11th, 1918. The War, the runners tell us, is kaput at 11 a.m. Thus we expect a gentle morning and have some schnapps handy to toss in our coffee

and we have a few cigars now that we can relax. It's thus a shock to find we have the terrible Australians coming into the front line overnight and are sniping us like crazy with Dum Dum bullets, interspersed with tracer ammo.

Worse still they are hitting quite a few of our army who have relaxed their guard a bit.

We get seriously put out with all this unwanted activity and ring up the field batteries to drop a few down the throat of the ones irritating (and hitting) us.

"No go" the drop short boys say. "We are starting to lay our guns down in protective grease ready for the next war."

A lone figure comes along the dangerous parapet.

"Oh, gawd" Erik says, "It's the old man of the sea."

Hitler (Corporal) says "call for the artillery, be smart about it. We cannot allow insult to be added to our injury."

"No go," Erik says "the boys are laying down their guns in ordinary ready for the next round."

"Bastards," Hitler says. "Here now is what you must do," Erik, the oldest and strongest of our lot says.

"We don't have to do anything Corporal. It's all about kaput."

"Never!" Hitler shoots back, "they're giving this trench a hard time. Load your belts up and clear their parapets at two and a half minutes to eleven."

"What will that achieve, Iron Cross Runner?" Erik asks, but asks in a respectful tone. This lone warrior is conveying conviction, it seems.

"Just keep their capitalistic heads down hard" he says, "let the German Nation go down with honour". He produces a pocket watch and says, "Ready? Now". Erik puts his thumbs on the double button and Joachim clears the long run of belts. The third man Johannes drags up more ammo.

"On my call," Hitler says. An Aussie sniper's bullet whistles past his ear, he doesn't flinch,

"Fire," he says, thus from two and a half minutes to 11 a.m. until Hitler cries "stop" the team fires the longest sustained machine gun burst of the war. The gun overheats, the belts start chattering, the guns under real pressure,

"go on" Hitler cries, we don't need this gun again today.

At 11 a.m. exactly this bandaged but firm chap says "enough", a deathly silence sets in.

"Up chaps" Hitler says, "honour is satisfied, stand and take a bow." Knowing the accuracy of the Australians opposite us this is a very chancy business but impelled by the Corporal who leads by example we stand and take a bow, the Aussies give us a clap. We take our bottles of schnapps and head over no mans land to their line. They are standing in the open. Hitler turns on his heel "Psaw" he says, "There can be no accommodations in this life, not now, not ever".

We enjoy a drink and a chat with the mixed troops now out of the trench; the drinks are as mixed as the troops. The Aussies are amusing, they are as dry as chips but very quick.

"Sorry to shoot your mates," they say, "it's nothing personal, it was only ever business and the desire to get back to Oz."

"Is Oz that great?" we ask, "perhaps not," they say but its home.

We have a jolly time until the booze runs out about 5 p.m. so we all shake hands and head back to our trenches. We meet Hitler a few days later when shouldering our arms we get on the railway stock trucks. Joachim has misplaced his carbine somewhere while on the machine gun team, but there's plenty lying around in the bog of No Man's Land, thus he picks up the newest one handy and hefts that back to Germany with him. The formalities over and free to go home, Joachim asks Hitler where he is heading.

"God knows." he says, "Home I think, Austria."

"Oh, you're Austrian?" we ask. This queer cuss stops like he's been shot and says "Austria is part of the Greater Germany."

"Not yet," Erik says.

"Wait and see," our Iron Cross Corporal replies.

Joachim is off to Potsdam, his parents are manufacturers, they turn out shoes, tinned beef and pork and wireless receivers, all things the German Army have carted away as produced and in the main have paid for.

"Come along for a few days, Corporal." he says, "there's plenty of food in the house, have a breather," and he does.

He's a very compelling character, is still getting over his shoulder wound and is really no trouble. Joachim's mum gets him doctored and his uniform cleaned and generally gives him a bit of T.L.C that army life has totally deprived him of. When he sets off out Dad gives him a decent roll of cash to carry him along a bit. It was a nice thing to have done and it proves to be a valuable investment in the long run. Joachim gets back to Heidelberg in February and Germany staggers under the reparations loaded on her by the old Europeans who totally reject Woodrow Wilson's kind tendency to show magnanimity in defeat. The old Europeans sow the dragons teeth of another war and the very circumstances surrounding this provide the so troubled waters for born political activists to do well in.

Joachim continues his post war interest in the theatre and being not short of the readies after he is capped by Heidelberg appears on the stage in a whole raft of character spots in both theatre and films.

He meets Hitler quite by chance walking around Potsdam one Friday morning. They meet and greet and Joachim asks Hitler what brings him here.

"Well," he says, "I'm here to meet Frick in half an hour."

Frick is a very well regarded Berlin banker. Hitler has obviously climbed the political tree if he's here to meet at his home such a high flyer in Berlin Finance.

"The money men," Hitler tells him, "are as lost as we at this time, politics creates some strange bedfellows. Germany is totalitarian, unsuited to this so called democracy of the so called republic. But its volcanic energy is there to be directed." He stops, "It will take a little time," he says, "but only a little time."

In retrospect, with the war ending towards the end of 1918 it's astonishing to reflect on just how soon Hitler's thoughts take root.

Elgar's famous anthem says "The tumult and the shouting dies, etc." It never did in Germany, from the time Hitler started talking to the disaffected returned soldiers until he and the Nations Wagnerian end.

Joachim leads a very interesting time through all this. His family are seriously rich, so he's able to get on with what he wants to do and he combines various aspects of the stage to keep occupied. He sings with Hagan and his heroes in the Bayreuth Festival, much favoured by Hitler and much publicised by the Mitford Sisters with all of the Nazi hierarchy in the best seats. Erik the machine gunner is there with a detail of the Brown Shirts and comes back stage to meet and greet with Joachim



"It's all go," he tells Joachim, "but between you and me I think Adolf will do a deal with the old establishment and some of us may find ourselves teaming up yet again on a

machine gun.”

They laugh and slug down a few Schnapps. Joachim is hardly back in Potsdam when an up and coming theatre producer lobs on his door step.

He tells Joachim he is planning to produce a clever drawing room farce called Prudence and the Prurient. It's an unknown play thought to have been written by Oscar Fingal O'Flaherty Wills Wilde about 1890. It's never been produced. A friend in a Dublin old scores shop sends him the script.

It's quite brilliant, there are no royalties to pay and it has a cast of 5 characters in which one actor plays three roles. The producer has lined up a very good young actress, a rellie of Guderian, the later famous Tank General. She will play the ingénue, Prudence. He has a couple of old hands to play the odds and sods and he wants Joachim to play both twin brothers who provide the Prurient Itch part and also that of the Anglican curate who provides the moral restraint overtones.

The plus factors of the parts are so obvious that Joachim immediately accepts. They work it up over a short rehearsal period and set Berlin Theatre goes on their ears when they open in the Earnst Theatre near the Adlon Hotel. The play becomes the Mouse Trap must see and runs without interruption from 1934 to 1939 and more than fills all of the characters day. The play lends itself to excerpt playing, thus they perform for Goering at Karinhall, for Hitler at his mountain eyrie and at country houses throughout Germany.

Everything is travelling at a frenetic pace in Germany. No-one can quite understand how Hitler has achieved legitimacy in this most orthodox and serious of countries.

'How does he do it?' many people who should know better ask. Joachim can understand Hitler's single mind all encompassing drive, he has read philosophy at university. He knows that not much in the world for good or evil gets done without it.

It's the evil bit that is worrying Joachim and Voight Senior. The Brown shirt era can be overlooked in knocking the nation into shape but the victimisation of the Jews, who form such a part of the warp and woof of German national life, has turned very sinister and beyond reason. Joachim and his dad have a serious talk about it on Sunday last when they take time out, get rid of the servants from the wing and have a serious discussion on what they have seen. Voight Senior's enterprises use up a lot of labour and Himmler has taken a working party out to the camps to demonstrate the huge pool of workers they have behind barb wire and invite the manufacturers including Bayer and I. G. Farben, who are in the inspection group, to set up shop in adjacent areas, all at some cost but minimal cost on a sliding escalating scale, with proceeds to the Nazis.

He comes back badly shaken, among the faces he sees at the camps is a former neighbourhood resident whose magnificent home for over three generations is now lived in by a Party official.

"This," Voight Senior says, "will all get a lot worse before it gets better."

"What would you do Jo?"

"Well Dad, I'm busy in the theatre and quite happy expressing what little talent I have (he is modest, his acting talent is a huge one) in the way I am. But I see clearly the outcome of Herr Adolf's direction. He is smoothing the roadway to let in the Four Horsemen again, it can only end that way despite the bumps, thumps and detours that will mark the way."

"So?" Voight Senior asks.

"Easy Peasy," Jo says, "Go out to do a due diligence on your lands and meat packing interests in the Argentine, take nothing with you but your Swiss bank books (most of the Voight money is held in the Swiss Cantonment,) develop a heart condition and never come back."

“But, but, but,” Voight says, “somewhat amazed.

“No but’s,” Jo says, “if you stay here you must use the bountiful slave labour, in the fullness of time you will go to jail or worse for having done that, you will lose what you have.”

Somewhat amazingly Voight flies out to Buenos Aires on a flying boat ten days later, carries almost nothing with him to indicate flight or thoughts of non-return. He reports in sick a bit later and Mrs. Or Frau Voight flies out to join him. In a sort of a way they live happily and prosperously ever after but get away even a bit further when they can and live on their vineyard in Cape Province, it doesn’t get them away from the Bruiderbond, but it takes them out of the many Nazi eyes in the Argentine. Whatever, as they concede Joachim’s advice was very good advice indeed.

Jo now takes over the management of Voight A.G. from the Potsdam office, runs it along as is, doesn’t expand it, but doesn’t sell it either. It’s all sure fire stuff and the staff are competent.

The comedy ideal Prudence and the Prurient is now main stream Berlin entertainment and many people of both note and notoriety come back stage to meet and greet Joachim, who runs hard in his triple role most evenings but is coping well. Some come to sound him out, others to frighten him. He talks to William Bullitt and Joe Kennedy, both of ambassadorial fame together one evening. He forms the opinion that one is incompetent and the other defeatist, nothing to be gained from either. More impressively, the Black and Silver eminence of the later Gauletier of Czechoslovakia, Reinhard Heydrich, turns up. Jesus, does he look sinister and impressive in his death’s head SS uniform. He snaps stiff arm ‘Heil Hitler’, Jo gives a bent arm reply. He is nothing but direct.

“You’ve never seen fit to join the party?” he says.

“Never been asked,” he replies, “but my Dad’s a member.”

“Ah,” he says, “the Argentinian.”

“He’s not that well.” Jo says.

“But perhaps,” says this know all, “not so sick either.”

“He’s done his bit for Germany.” Jo says.

“We have much more to do yet.” says Heydrich. “What’s your understudy like?”

“Very good, I use him every week when I’m attending to matters relevant to Voight A.G.”

“Are you prepared to do your bit for the Reich?” he asks, “like this weekend?”

“Mmm, of course, but only if necessary. I don’t like short changing the paying public with under studies on Friday and sat nights, the matinees ok.”

“Alright,” he says, “we want you to play Ribbentrop for the weekend at the White Horse Inn. Can you do it?” It’s better if it’s not known that Joachim is out of the country.”

“No probs.” Jo says.

“You will need to sign deep secrecy papers,” Heydrich says.

“No,” says Jo, “I’ve shared guns and trench and table with our leader, I’m single and I don’t pass on secrets.

Heydrich ruminates, he ticks off points on his long fingers, “the leader remembers you, you’re not untouchable you know but I can’t think of anyone brave enough in our mans country that would do you harm, you may be single but what about the pillow talk with Frau Guderian?”

Jo laughs, “I don’t go to bed to talk,” he says.

“Mmn, lucky you,” this icy cold sinister character replies. “And you can do Ribbontrop?”

“Absolutely,” Jo says, “tell me the when and where. Come to Gestapo Headquarters tomorrow at say 11am.” Heydrich says. “Himmler will talk to you a bit and perhaps we can

lunch after in house, we would prefer not to be seen to be talking to you publicly, someone smart may put two and two together.”

Thus Joachim walks into the Prince Wilhelmstrasse buildings just before 11 am. Erik, now in Gestapo uniform meets him at the door. Joking, he says “Gawd mate, you're brave, not all of Heinrich's visitors ever come out.” He snaps a ‘Heil Hitler’ and takes Jo up to the presence.

While its Himmler's meeting a sharp little guy, the famed Goebbels is doing the planning and it's a very thorough effort. Filling in the details is a little chap in SS uniform whom they simply say is Dieter. Actually he knows Deiter; he was doing pre-med at uni when Jo knew him. He looks quizzically at Jo and tips him the merest ghost of a wink. He knows his onions too, thus the coming weekend Jo's in the White Horse Inn dining with heavyweights.

Joachim is there as Foreign Minister and expects Foreign Ministerish type questions. Not a bit of, it's all about wine and more wine. He can see that he could soon be on the ropes if he doesn't watch it, so simply says “the Fuehrer tells me it's my patriotic duty to promote German and German only tipples. Let me tell you about the wonderful wines produced at Lorelei wines. This is a Rhineland winery owned by Voight A.G, so Jo is able to do a big sell on his family owned products. They then get Jo onto beers and he promotes in a big way Carlsberg, arguably the best beer in the wide world owned 40% by Voight and co. All's well that ends well. Ribbentrop completes his mission to Russia as Minister Plenipotentiary from the German Government and gets his non aggression pact and Heydrich calls him in to congratulate him on his very impressive effort at the White Horse Inn. Dieter has been there full time to check on things.

Much, much, much later, when a lot of blood, water and history has flowed under the bridges of Europe they ask, “Can you do the Fuehrer next and can you voice Goebbels?” Having spoken to Heinrich a bit this is very easy. To get Adolf mannerisms right he, or they, organise the cinematic genius Leni Riefenstahl to bring in newsreels of Hitler doing this and that. It's all relatively easy to a good thespian like Joachim.



Things now scream along and he finds himself in Speers marvellously built Fueherbunker below the Reich chancellery. The focal point of latter day Berlin. He is drinking schnapps and chatting to Eva Braun, quiet a nice girl but no intellectual. She is amazed at how like Hitler Jo looks in his look alike uniform, moustache and cap. Hitler is due in shortly, they will swap places and Joachim will fly out for Hitler's Berchtesgaden eyrie, just to confuse the world a bit while Hitler gets on with plan B. The huge main drag has been blocked and two tiny Storch Spotter planes have put down and taxied up the Kurfensdamm to a convenient fly off point. Nothing else is moving until, with a scream of sirens, an open huge Mercedes touring car pulls up. Before it even stops several in-the-know plotters fire their .88mm flak guns mounted on the flak towers atop the I.G Farben building into the car. It and the occupants are blasted to Kingdom come. Two parachutes blossom as the shooters abandon the scene and float to earth. They shuck their chutes and disappear. There is no one around to apprehend them anyway with the street blocked.

Things now move within the bunker. Otto Skorzeny, a huge Wermacht soldier who

makes his fortune in later life selling ready mixed concrete to the public works people all over Germany enters with an even bigger soldier carrying a cocked and ready to roll Schmeisser assault pistol. Skorzeny is admitted to the key door, he posts the big soldier outside, "shoot any one who tries to get in," he says. Skorzeny nods to Erik and Joachim who are inside, Eva has retired to her rooms to listen to an American record that Jo has given her. Martin Borman and Himmler are sitting easy on a sofa.

"Where's the Fuehrer?" Bormann asks.

Skorzeny, a very likeable chap says, "well Martin, as Shakespeare says, the bit players, having played their parts depart the scene."

Quick as a flash he shoots Bormann between the eyes. Erik puts a Luger to the back of Himmler's head, "drop your pants," Heinrich he says, "we are told you do it often in company that suits you."

Himmler does. "Bend over," Erik says and jabs a huge hypodermic needle in his buttocks. Otto throws a rug over Bormann and looks Joachim in the eye.

"Well, actor, will you now play Hitler for real for a while?"

"What's the alternative?" Joachim asks.

"Oh," Otto says, "if you won't play ball I'm to Bormannise you right now."

Jo laughs, "lead on Maestro," he says.

They move rapidly through the bunker, a car takes them and Eva, who is bemused by the amount of brandy they have drunk, is bundled with Jo in one Storch, the props turning and the pilot jumps out and Otto fills the seat. Erik and a stupefied Himmler get into the next plane with the pilot.

"Jesus, Otto," Jo says, "this is a fair payload for a Storch."

"Yes, normally," says Otto, "I have put a little something in the fuel for added boost." He taxis along the thoroughfare and we are easily air borne within seconds, in tandem we building hop over the Wansee lake and put down in a flat green meadow on the German plain.

"Quick now," Otto says, "the Luftwaffe have smoothed our way, but it best not to tempt fate."

They jump into a corrugated metal sided, double engine plane and are off the ground very smartly. Otto and Erik quickly scissor off Heinrich's moustache (never trust a man with a mossy, Otto dryly says). They strip off his black uniform, put him in a parachutes smock and place papers in his pockets. They strap a para pack, sans chute to his back and make upwards movements with their hands to the pilot in this rowdy and vibrating aircraft. They go up quite a bit and then level out.

"Can you do Himmler's voice well enough, actor?" he asks.

"Sure," Joachim says and then frightens the death out of them with a Himmler take, "I will arrest you and slaughter you both when we land, my orders are ever direct from the Fuehrer." Jo now assumes Hitler's voice, "Total bullshit Heinrich," he says, "they are to receive medals and commendation's, Chancellor Bismarck has agreed to this. Also cigars and compensatory virgins should there be any left in the 3rd Reich."

They all dissolve into laughter. Otto, the activist, opens the sliding door of the plane, it's incredible and the plane swoops and ducks. Otto pushes Heinrich out the door and hastily fastens it.

"Goodnight, sweet Prince," he says, "may the Jew's you have dispatched dismember you."

They land at the strip nearest Berchtesgaden and motorcade up to the Eagle's nest. Perhaps one of the finest mountain views in the wide world. They are welcomed and made comfortable and Eva, finding another glass of Brandy, she toasts Joachim.

"Here's to a possibly interesting evening my non Fuehrer," she says.

Otto whistles up a big platter of Bavarian food and some fine pilsener.

"Now, to work," he says.

They munch rough Bavarian black bread, slice big chunks of sausage and top up their Steins with black beer.

"How do you see it, actor?" Skorzeny asks.

"Well who's running Germany?" Jo asks.

Otto says, "well, you and me if we want. We've removed the real bad influences. Hitler, Bormann, Himmler, in the past few hours. You have, as the new Hitler pro tem, all the power possible. We may have to bag up one or two more like Von Ribbentrop but the rest for the most part are harmless, sort of."

"OK, Otto," Jo says, "we're on the brink, so let's do some brinkmanship."

Otto, after all the days action is a bit directionless too at this stage. He picks up pad and pencil.

"Jahwohl, Mein Fuehrer," he says, "and we do what?"

"Oh, Rundstedd can boss the forces, Rommell can stake out the breadbasket of Russia in the Ukraine, we can starve the Ruski's and deal later for their oil. We can back up the front line from air fields safely behind the lines. It wouldn't be a bad idea to bump off Benito and put his son-in-law, Ciano in his place."

"What about the Japs?" Otto asks.

"Well," Jo says, "when they went bull headed for the Yanks at Pearl Harbour instead of biting into Russia from their end they lost all usefulness to us. Let the Yanks dismember them, they're itching to do that and Europe is only a troublesome first at this stage. Put all our forces, after settling on what will be the front line now in Russia, on armed alert, but quit all new offensives, rein in the Luftwaffe and just go onto anchor watch, but as a precaution triple the ack ack."

Otto jots all this down.

"What then?"

"We talk," Jo says.

"Who to?" Otto asks.

Ten days later after they advise the Yanks they have perfected the world's first atom bomb, which we are perfectly aware they have well towards completion from our source at Los Alamos we are ready to meet informally. We haven't got a bomb half-way there yet but it's a ploy worth a try to shock them into a meeting. We meet in neutral territory at the Prado in Madrid. Harry Hopkins is there from the U.S. Anthony Eden from the U.K. Russia is not invited as we occupy so much of their bread basket, also France doesn't count.

It's all quite timely, the U.S. are bridling at holding back on the Jap's to fight the Brits war, both the Brits and the Yanks are sick to death of Stalin's mulishness. The Aussies send along Casey, a very decent man, a man who should have been Prime Minister. Otto has a belly laugh and tells Casey to go away and look at the paintings for a while. Otto alone represents Germany, there are so few in the plot they can't let anyone else in and Jo can hardly appear in his Hitler role. Otto tells them that this meeting provides the window of opportunity to stop the fighting here this day. Or, he says they can wait until next Saturday and reconvene then after the Luftwaffe have dropped an atom Bomb on St. Paul's to show what they can do.

The Yanks and Brits jump up, "oh that's not necessary, but our bosses won't accept Hitler staying in power." Otto waves them down.

"Let's face it, fellas, it was Brit appeasement that got Adolf to the top, it's all your fault

and having allowed and encouraged it to happen you can hardly cavil at it now.”

The Yank says, “but we have you on the run.”

Otto laughs, he's playing the biggest hand of bluff poker ever played in this sad old world.

“I take it,” he says, “you are happy to allow us to show our new strong hand and to meet back here next Saturday, that is if there's a London left.”

They both jump up again,

“No, no, no.” they cry, “but what about Hitler?”

Otto puts on a bland face; he has won his so big hand.

“Oh,” he says, “we will accept the St. Helena solution, it worked fine with Napoleon.

Back at the Eagle's nest next day (Sunday) Otto regales Joachim with his account of the big 3 meeting.

“Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Otto,” Jo says, “what am I supposed to do on St. Helena?”

Otto roars with laughter. “Oh,” he says, “the fishing's real good, you seem pretty cosy with Eva who will have to go with you, but unlike you, she'll be able to come and go a bit.

Unfortunately you'll have to take Blondie (Hitler's German shepherd) to make it look good.” Actually, Blondie is the bane of Jo's life. The dog is smart and well knows Jo isn't the real Hitler. So Jo is always at risk of a very stand off and suspicious Blondie sinking his fangs into him.

Turning serious Otto says, “Actor, you have played the biggest bit part ever in this sorry old world. You can spend a year writing the most remarkable autobiography ever. We can then come clean with the Allies and get you back to civilisation to sell the story and to possibly play the lead in the inevitable film of it. On the other hand, if you can't agree to all this we'll simply take you, Eva and Blondie back to the Bunker and write “THE END” to it all there.”

Joachim laughs, “Well Otto,” he says, “Eva's quite bright company and perhaps a bit of fishing off that God forsaken bit of rock may be relaxing.

Authors Note

During the bloody regime of Adolf Hitler there were many “What if” scenarios. This completely fictitious one fits the remarkable Otto Skorzeny like a glove. He did many Commando jobs for Hitler including the rescue of Mussolini from a mountain top type fortress, he was initially held in. No less credible is the approach that a sports man made to the British Foreign office early in 1936. He had a good sounding plan to snipe Hitler at the Olympic and Games in Berlin. It was well thought out but the Foreign Office knocked it back. Again it is only one of the “What If's” that were around at that time.