

THE SUMMIT

Leo was assigned as a cultural attache to Kenya.

“Do what you can to drum up trade. You can boost the local economy. And you can make a world of difference back home.”

Leo mapped out the trade routes. They seemed so remote, but there were way to work them.

“I wished that I had been assigned to Nigeria.”

“You will do well.”

He was sitting in an open-air café when he was noticed by the only other person in there.

“Dipping your biscuits in your tea. How very British!”

“My name is Leo. I am from Toronto.”

“A Canadian. I’m Bobby Bennet.”

He was getting an official introduction to the British Ambassador. This would just be the beginning. He thought that he would languish here. But he was suddenly right in the middle of some vibrant trade. He felt that he was more than acquitting himself.

“There’s a little favor that I’d like you to do for me.”

Robert Bennet was asking for information on what a German firm was doing. He couldn’t have found this information out on his own. When Robert and Leo next sat down for tea, they had a lot to discuss.

Leo thought about what had just happened. He had served as intelligent assets for the Brits. He was a spy. He wondered what the Canadians knew about any of this. He just went about his job, and everyone seemed happy. He was an excellent trade representative and a super spy!

No one had the remotest idea what was really going on. Leo had total access everywhere in the country. He got on fantastically with the Kenyans. And he made friends with every nationality in country. The Canadians were grooming him for a more authoritative position, perhaps ambassador.

Robert met with him in their favorite café. There was no one around. Robert seemed a little paranoid. He kept looking in back of him.

“Are you good?”

“I just want to be safe.”

“You seem different.” a lot more than te

“I have a big job for you to take care of. I need you to keep tabs on the Kenyans.”

“What are you telling me?”

“There’s some serious things going on. I am going to need some real information.”

Leo was now spying on his host country. The British were afraid what was going on among the people. Their privileged position was being challenged. The colonial government were repressing the indigenous people in a bloody war. The Mau Mau found that their key positions were being betrayed.

The café summits seemed to be giving the British a distinct advantage. That was until there was a bombing at the café. Of course, the Kenyan rebels were blamed.

“They killed civilians.”

Leo continued to feed the British intelligence.

“Leo, why are you here.”

“I am supposed to help develop trade.”

“We are in a war. We do not need trade. We need freedom.”

What was happening to the rule based on tea and biscuits?

Leo challenged Robert, “You were behind the bombing.”

“What makes you say that?”

“The Kenyans had nothing to gain.”

“They knew that I was getting information. Maybe they suspect you.”

Leo needed to make an end to that suspicion. He turned on his allies. He started by feeding false information to the British. This British did not yield. They only became more ruthless.

One Kenyan leader explained, “This is how you make freedom. You make your captor show his real face.”

“No more tea and biscuits.”

Kitwana stared at Leo. He didn’t understand the humor. He was going to require more than a little humor.

“You won’t be able to walk both sides of the fence for long.”

“I don’t even feel like a real person.”

The Canadian Embassy called him in for a consultation.

“Something unusual is going on. You are going to have to investigate.”

He felt like the fox being asked to investigate what was happening in the hen house. Leo realized that he knew so much more. He understood the British command structure. They were trying to break down the structure of the opposition. But he was the perfect foil to their actions.

Kitwana explained, “If you wanted to, you could destroy them.”

The British were also becoming afraid.

“I thought that you were my number one man.”

“What do you need Robert?”

“Your information is starting to seem second-rate.”

“Robert, you are cutting deep. What am I supposed to reply?”

He had already gone over the other side.

“My people want you picked up.”

“What are you talking about?”

“They are telling me that you’ve gone over to the other side. They think you’re a double agent.”

“Do I look like a Kenyan?”

Robert laughed.

“Would you like some tea?”

Leo informed Kitwana, “They’re on to me.”

“You can’t maintain any deeper cover. You are going to have to abandon ship.”

“I am going to the other side.”

Leo turned his back on privilege and culture. He was becoming a new man.

“If we had gotten some of this information sooner, we could probably have taken the

advantage. They have changed the game already. They have brought in the big guns.”

The British were now engaged in an all out massacre.

“They are trying to degrade the structure of the opposition.”

“We will beat them at their own game.”

The Kenyans were not going to adopt the methods of European warfare. And their people were the most vulnerable.

“The British are winning the battles. But they cannot stop the wave of independence.”

Leo was now being hunted as an enemy of the state. He was even more hated than the Kenyan rebels.

“He has turned his back on his friends.”

“We should have never trusted a Canadian.”

“He loved tea and biscuits like the best of us.”

The British were using the kind of blitzkrieg favored by their enemies in the Second World War. Leo was hiding in a small village away from the action.

“Someone wants to put a bullet in your head.”

Leo thought about where his life had taken him. He was a criminal in England, but he was hardly a felon in the United States. He had a cousin in Fort Lauderdale. It didn’t take long before he was out.

Even with Kenyan independence, there were still agents looking for him. The British would not say this to anyone, but there was definitely a price on his head.

“I guess that I will never see London Bridge.”

He and his cousin Alex laughed.

Years later, he was down in a Miami for a fishing trip. And he saw Robert in the lobby of the hotel. And he wanted to tell him to let bygones be bygones.

“I realized at that moment that is was not my place. Robert, all that I could think about were those bodies in the café in Nairobi. These were friends of ours. But in your war, they were expendable. That was the end for me.”

There was a world that Alida had know which was coming to an end. No one could stop the wave of freedom. Even Alida had felt that wave come upon her.

“I grew fed up with my life. I was tired of feeling like a servant. No one really appreciated me. I had to figure out who I was.”

Mrs. Devora Butterfield was comfortably reading her novel on the sofa. A family friend Erwin, sat across from her and was also reading. Mr. Butterfield had long ago gone to bed.

“What are you reading Devora?”

“It is a mystery book about woman named Rachel who shoot her lover after the threatens to reveal their love to her husband. She refuses to give in to his scheme for extortion.”

“Sounds like quite a story.”

“Rachel really comes alive when she is with Reg. She gets none of that passion when she is with her husband. But she does not want Reg to believe that he is in control.”

“My book is not so noble. It is a spy story. A Brit starts to throw his fate in with the locals when they start to rebel against their colonial masters.”

“That sounds very exciting.”

“I only wish the writing was a little more stirring. I probably could do much better

myself.”

As Mrs. Butterfield read, she seemed to accompany her reading with all the emotion of the tale. Erwin would have given his world to get her in mind and be a part of her story. He concentrated on his book with a great deal of effort. He loved the intrigue. But he kept imagining him as the hero of Mrs. Butterfield’s book.

“I don’t know what it is tonight. I do not have the stamina for my book.”

“Are you going to quit?”

“I enjoy the reading. Perhaps, you could tell me more about your book. It might inspire me with my book.”

Erwin was imagining a female spy and all that she might do to change the narrative.

“Devora, I am sure that you could keep a secret if you needed to .”

“I have always imagined myself as Mata Hari. All these men wanting me. And me doing my best to trick every one of them.”

“You are quite a charming women. I am surprised that all the men in the colony have not battled over you.”

She smiled, “Oh, they do. They do all the time.”

Erwin’s story had its own appeals. The Brit did his best to uphold the values of his culture. He was civilized. He believed in truth and integrity. He soon found out what those beliefs meant. The British were ruthless. They used any provocation to threaten the people. He was called on to be utterly barbaric. This was hardly his station.

Erwin looked at Mrs. Butterfield’s gentle manners. She was hardly the symbol of an autocratic regime.

“Tell me more about this woman killing her husband.”

“She kills her lover.”

“That is what I meant. Perhaps she simply feared the truth.”

“She was perfectly happy with the truth.”

“Then why was she sneaking around on her husband.”

“He was ignoring her. He was not seeing to her greatest needs.”

“What is a woman’s greatest need? To be loved? To be cared for?”

“To be told the truth.”

She gave Erwin that deep, penetrating smile. He stirred in his seat.

Erwin went back to reading. He thought about Mata Hari, and how she would interrupt his narrative. She would make honest men do dishonest things.

His story was getting pulled in multiple directions. His hero was trying to be true to his principles, but he was attracted by a Mata Hari.

Erwin jumped into Devora’s tale. What would cause a woman to shoot her lover? She wanted to deny all her own offenses. She wanted to seem as if she was forced.

Rachel rehearsed her testimony. She had been by herself. Her husband was up at the rubber plantation. He was making his way among the people. He was forgetting about the safety of his wife. And Clay had made his way to the owner’s house.

“You are a mighty fine woman, Mis Rachel. I wouldn’t mind having you as my wife.”

“I already have a husband. If I had two, I would be in violation of the law.”

“I wasn’t thinking of it that way. We are both civilized people. I respect your husband

very much. We work together. If I had met you while you were still single, I would have felt quite honored for you to take an interest in me.”

“We were never so lucky. I have always been Henry’s wife.”

“I am just speculating.”

“Some speculating can be harmful.”

“Sure it can. It can get your emotions all heated up.”

“Yes, they can.”

“You are not getting heated up.”

“Not in the least. Nor are you, I trust.”

“I am doing just fine.”

“Then we have an understanding.”

“Temporarily. But things can change. A wild wind could pick us up and blow everything under us away.”

“That all sounds preposterous.”

“The weather can get quite angry around here.”

“That is why I do my best to maintain my composure.”

“Your passions do not get the best of you.”

“As I said, I try to stay in control.”

“I guess that is how we are supposed to be. Civilized people.”

“That is quite right.”

“Although in my novel, Rachel, the civilized are the most rowdy.”

“That is quite a different story. I know that my husband has trouble with his workers. And he can be quite a focused man.”

“I supposed that is what he has to do. He has to retain discipline.”

“I wish that he would not be so cruel with you.”

“I would be very tender with you.”

“How tender would you be?”

“I would be so tender that you wouldn’t know what hit you when you finally felt my sting.”

“I never saw you as that kind of threat.”

“Our emotions have a way of getting out of control. We do crazy things.”

“Would you do crazy things?”

“Would you?”

“I have been doing them all my life. That is why I came here. I thought that I would be away from temptation. And that would be the last thing on my mind. I would be a devout woman. But I can think about nothing else. I want to go out in the jungle and roam with the wild tigers. I want to let my true nature come out.”

Clay grabbed her and devastated her the way that a wild tiger would.

“He left me with no choice.”

Rachel needed to make her story more consistent. There wasn’t much time. The police would be here in any minute. And she had a gun with her fingerprints all over it. And a dead body lying right next to her,

“I was trying to talk to him all friendly and all. And he thought that I was coming on to

him. I did what I could to calm him down. It was like throwing gasoline on a fire. The sweat was pouring from his forehead. He was like a wild animal ready to pounce. There was nothing that I had could do to stop him. I needed to subdue him the best that I could. He just kept coming and coming. I had to bring him down.”

“She sounded as if she was on the hunt. This was the European way. They were always on the hunt. They were besieged by the people. They needed to resort to drastic means.”

Clay didn’t move. Rachel didn’t have an alibi. She was completely involved. He was harassing her. She did what she could. She didn’t have much time. He was charging. Those words,

“He was charging.”

You just had to look at the trophy on the ground. He was all splayed out. He looked atrocious.

“I didn’t do it. He was so awful. He attacked me. I needed to protect myself.”

There were no marks on her body. But she bore the psychological effects. Clay was that kind of guy. He was given to his irresistible impulses. That was why he had come to this place.

She remembered those nights when they had been together. They were both of that same nature. Very physical people. They were restrained by all these laws. Two wild tigers in the jungle.

That was how she needed to tell the story.

Devora held the book tighter. She wiped the sweat from her brow. She took a drink. She was giving herself away. She was married. She was not a she-devil.

“You look as if you have seen a ghost.”

Devora smiled.

“It is just the way that the book is going. It is very good.”

Too good. She seemed to be running out of excuses. You were not supposed to read books like this until all hours of the night. A small dose, then off to bed. Too much cocoa , and the children would become restless. She did not want to reveal anything more to Erwin.

Devora looked over at him and smiled.

He looked back, “What is it?”

“You look so very well-behaved.”

“And?”

“I have nothing to worry about from you.”

“Except that I might make off with your book.”

“Don’t worry. My grip is quiet strong.”

Her grip became stronger. He could not keep on with the fantasy.

“I thought that if I stayed up with you that I might win your love. But you have way more endurance for this kind of thing than I do. I suspect that you have much more of an active imagination.

“I like to read.”

“That is a very attractive characteristic. A woman who is drawn to intelligence. I will see you in the morning. I would like to say good night to Arthur as well. But he quit on us a long time ago.

“Good night, kind sir.”

Erwin could not stop thinking about Devora Butterfield. He was a wild tiger who was on the hunt. He was ready to attack her, and she needed to bring him down with a hunting rifle.

"I could have used a hand gun," she replied.

He could feel her sweet kisses on his lips. He did not want to stop his fantasy, but sleep took its toll on him.

The next morning, Mrs. Butterfield was sitting at the table almost as if she had never left from the previous night. But she was dressed in a lovely yellow dress. She was ready to meet the day.

"Be prepared, Erwin," Arthur informed him. We are about to enter the rainy season.

Rainy season was hardly the word for it. This was like drowning yourself in the ocean and never being able to get out. Erwin thought that he could deal with it.

"We learn how to accept it," told Mrs. Butterfield to him.

Erwin could accept nothing about what was going on around here.

"Devora, you seem to be the only ray of sunshine that I see around here."

He was accustoming himself to those hot rays. He soaked in all their power. It only left him wanting more. He was a thirsty man ready to drink up.

Devora was not going to give in to him in the least. She wasn't even going to play the muse to help kick start his fantasy. She was more his confessor. And she was ready to administer the cruelest penance.

"Have you ever thought about a cold bath?"

Her taunting was meant to tempt him more. After her sting, she returned to her lair. He was left to think about Rachel and Clay.

"Are you lethal, Devora?"

He could not actually ask her that question. But he did feel himself creep ever so closer. Tonight she was sitting with her husband. She had a book, but she might as well have been knitting. There was none of the drama of the night before. He was sure that he could never engage her in the same kind of discussion.

The rains continued the next day. He would feel himself sinking deeper in the mud. He was getting churned around. He was about to float up and get carried away.

"I have no idea how you people can tolerate this."

"We do not try to fight it."

"Erwin tries to fight everything. That is just the way that he is."

"Mrs. Butterfield I am glad that you have become such an observant judge of character. I will avoid talking about frustrated housewives."

"I make this into my castle if you don't mind, Mr. Grove."

"How was he supposed to counter her defense?"

"If you would let me, I could really teach you about the mysteries of life."

"I love my husband."

"You love this. He is an excuse for a man. Why don't you just wheel him to the dinner table."

"We know things about each other that no two other people will ever know. That is the basis for our profound happiness."

"This? This?"

“I am not so bad with a shotgun, Mr. Grove.”

“We have turned so formal lately.”

“Don’t you have anything else to discuss?”

“There is the rain and you. The only two topics in this God-forsaken place. Agony and ecstasy.”

“Heaven, Erwin. You have no patience. There is a lot more life ahead of you. Arthur and I have each other. We make a wonderful life.”

“I could make quite a wonderful something with you.”

“You are getting a little too close.”

“I am doing all that I can to get next to you.”

“Love is just not a physical thing. That is why the rain plagues you so. There is not much to your soul. I wish that I could help you more.”

“You are doing just fine. Just kiss me on the forehead.”

“Where’s your book? You could use some food for the mind. You are giving in to your own corruption.”

“This is quite a corrupt place.”

Erwin started to read about his new home. There were so many dangers here. Little things. Insects and strange plants. All these things that could kill.

“Erwin, you are going to give yourself a heart attack.”

“If I am lucky, I will die in your arms.”

“I will probably reach you after it is too late.”

He gazed on her pleasant face. It got his blood rushing. He wanted to run his hands through her lustrous hair. He did what he could to get close to her. She kept twisting away.

“Erwin, you are scaring me. You need to quit this once and for all.”

Lost in those torrential rains, all that he could think about was her wondrous appeals. He could smell her sweet perfumes. He was soaked through and through, but she was rubbing her hands along his body. She was making him feel refreshed. She was giving him life.

“Won’t someone free us from this?”

The Butterfields gawked as he came in. What did he hope to prove by his complaints? They looked at each other and smiled.

“I love you dear,” she said.

Erwin was sure that she was performing just for him.

He asked her, “What do you have for me?”

“Nothing, nothing, and nothing.”

“You just have to look my way, and your glance will give you all that I need.”

“You are more deserving of a hundred lashes.”

“Then I will take all that and more. And I will tell myself that you are kissing my body.”

She was doing nothing less than turning him into this wild beast of the jungle. When he finally made his stand, she would act as if she had nothing to do with the catastrophe.

“This is ridiculous. I never led you on. I never gave you any indication that I was interested.”

“What really interests you? Do you know real passion? Are you even living?”

No one else could have played the role with such panache. He seemed bitter about

everything. He knew how to bite everything around him. When he was finally face to face with the one thing that he wanted, he told her so eloquently that she couldn't help but believing him. That made her reject him with all her might.

"No matter how much you want me, I would never be you My husband has me, and you will never have my heart."

"Even if he was dead, you would not yield."

"I cannot admit to such a universe."

"There will be a time when the world will change."

"And I will come begging you. Please!"

"You know better than I do."

"What do I know?"

"What thoughts reside in the deep recesses of my mind."

"If I do know, I make every effort to put such things out of my mind."

"If you even harbored a scintilla of such a thought, you would prove unfaithful to your husband,"

She gazed deeply in his face. She gave him everything that she had. This was a deep crisis for him. She stirred something deep in him. Was it enough? He needed to think about what she had shown him. All along she claimed that she felt this bliss for her husband. And Erwin had denied that there was anything there. In that gaze, was there something more? Had she revealed her soul. Or was that a soul reserved for Arthur Butterfield?

Erwin felt the lashing by Mrs. Butterfield. He accepted the judgement of hell. And he was sure that deep in her soul, she felt just the same. She had been playing one story for the benefit of her husband. And she had tried to reassure herself with this same tale. Down deep, she was a sinner who feasted on her own sin. Erwin was gambling that he was right. He was taking his chances. He was doing everything that he needed to do to attain his prize. And prize it was.

Devora had been egging him on. She knew exactly what she wanted. But he would have to be subtle. This was a place where a brain fever could take a man's will for life. And Erwin needed to figure out some way to make this happen.

Erwin convinced himself that Arthur Butterfield was torturing him by displaying his wife like this. Erwin was working out in these terrible rains. And Butterfield took his delight from his toil.

"I am there to destroy you!"

They both smiled.

"We are old and close friends. I would never do anything to hurt you. And nothing will ever come between us."

Erwin had spoken with such conviction. Even still, he had administered the fatal dose to his colleague.

"What has just happened to me?"

"You have swallowed all your ambitions in liquid form."

"Whatever are you talking about."

One of the strange brain fevers came over Mr. Butterfield.

"This is really all your own doing."

“How is that?”

“I gave you a remedy to your own suffering. But for a man who thinks too much of himself, this acts as a truth-telling serum that will inspire all the worse in you.”

“What are you talking about?”

“The magic people in the jungle know things. And I learned from them. You have been inside all this time so used to giving orders. This was how you worked out our business arrangement. I have gotten deeper into the land. So tell me, Arthur, how do you want to be?

For the time being, Mr. Butterfield descended into a vegetative state.

“If you figure out what is really wrong with you, you should come back to normal.”

How was he supposed to do that? Just like that, Devora’s great love had been taken from her.

“Why do you think that I am going to do now? Jump in your arms. I feel more concerned about my husband than ever. I will make up for all those emotions that he cannot feel.”

“That altruistic expression will not last. You will realize that you are a woman of real passion, and you are going to take what you need.”

“Everyone is not so base as you are. There are more humanitarian aims in the world. I can’t help it if you can’t understand.”

“That makes no sense.”

“We are not all perverts like you. There is something greater in our lives.”

Butterfield remained in his coma. And Devora cared for him. This only emboldened her more.

“You are a woman with desires. You can’t just put the genie back in the bottle.

“You are not going to make me melt. You did this to my husband.”

“That is not what happened. This drug is meant to reveal how he truly loves you. Not enough to get out of a coma.”

“Do you want to make a deal? I will be with you if you get him out of this state.”

“This is a harmless liquid. If he had any backbone, he could get himself out of this dilemma.”

“Why are you persecuting me so?”

“Let me show you. I will drink the liquid.”

He drank the drug. Nothing seemed to affect him at all.

“It has been open to long.”

“Something else is affecting Arthur. He finally has an excuse. He is running away from you.”

“Arthur loves me. You have practically killed him.”

The drug still had no effect on Erwin.

Devora administered a fresh dose of the drug on herself. All that it did was make her want Erwin more. She came from a deep religious upbringing. She felt guiltier than ever. She had done this to her husband. She wrestled with all her contradictory emotions.

In her dreams, she made wild passionate love to Erwin. But in the real world, there was no contact between them. She spent all her days caring for Arthur.

“I almost feel as if he is doing this to get back at us.”

“How could he do that?” asked Devora.

“The same way that I am able subdue him with the drug.”

All these people seemed liked devils.

There were times when Mrs. Butterfield thought about doing away with her husband. There were others when she wanted to plant a bullet right between the eyes of Erwin Grove.

Alida thought that there was some way to tell the story so that she did not feel so overwhelmed by the situation. If Erwin only had an accomplice. And the accomplice administered the drug on Erwin not Butterfield. This would get Devora off the hook.

And Erwin took the drug. And it had the worst effects on him. He hallucinated. He visited hell. He felt the worst pain. He worked his way through all the panic. And he escaped.

“Your roller coaster ride? They call it a flashback. It’s going to all happen again. Only next time, it will be even worse.”

He felt that he was going around for the hundredth time.

“Next time, I will love you.”

“You will.”

“Not at all. The denial will be worse than ever.”

If Erwin could actually kill the husband, then Devora would have a worse dilemma on her hands. She could claim that she was sticking to a principle. But Arthur would not be around. No principle could overcome real passion.

“I was a very bad girl where I came from. And I never got over it. It is now deep within me.

“What is deep within you?”

“My permanently damned soul.”

“How is that?”

“I always planned to get rid of my husband. Erwin just did the job.”

Alida knew all about that story.