

SAMPLE  
TRANSLATION

DAVID BENJAMIN  
SEVEN

PUBLISHED BY: ŠTUDENTSKA ZALOŽBA, 2011

TRANSLATED BY: GREGOR TIMOTHY ČEH

ORIGINAL TITLE: SEDEM

NUMBER OF PAGES: 313

## David Benjamin: Seven

### Chapter six

Waking up, my first thought was that it was all a dream. This was instantly displaced by a second thought that this was usually how desperate people console themselves after something terrible they wish wasn't true happens to them. I kept my eyes firmly shut, holding on to the darkness, afraid of the reality of being awake, listening out with fear for any sounds in my surroundings, wary in case I would again hear German being spoken. I was lying on something soft. All around me was silent. I opened my eyes and stared into the thick darkness. In a wave of panic I suddenly thought that the two consecutive hits over my head and my unconsciousness might have caused blindness. I rubbed my eyes and stared into the blackness that enveloped me until I began to recognize vague outlines in the dark.

I could still not hear any human voices, but suddenly I made out a faint scrabbling sound as if someone was scratching away at wood or a wall with metal claws. I raised my head to hear better, but it stopped. When the cramp in my neck forced me to drop my head back to the ground, the sound started up again. It seemed even louder. It was as if someone or something was madly hacking away at the wall. Still irrational with fear, I thought I must be locked up in a prison cell. Were there other cells close by here with other prisoners, and what I can hear is one of them trying – god knows with what tool, a spoon, a stone, the frames of his glasses or his nails, long nails that after months or even years of incarceration have developed into strong claws – to claw his way to freedom? I felt a cold shiver run down my entire body. I curled up and, just like I used to when I was young whenever I was afraid of the monsters of the dark, covered my ears with my hands – it was only then that I realized that I was no longer tied up.

I carefully felt around the soft surface that supported me from the side as well, and calmed down somewhat when I determined I was lying on a sofa, free and unbound with only a bandage round my head that started to itch rather unpleasantly. I sat up and the outlines around me began to look clearer. There was a window with a drawn curtain behind the sofa, with some light piercing through a narrow slit between the heavy curtain and the blind, allowing me to begin to discern some of the forms around me. Nothing indicated that I was in a prison cell belonging to the iron-masked man, quite the opposite in fact; the room was a relatively ordinary room with the usual furniture: a sofa, a table with two chairs, armchairs to be precise, the dark outline in the corner was probably a cupboard, a few bookshelves. The noise started up again, but I was unable to determine exactly where it was coming from. It seemed like it was coming from under the floor or inside the wall; after I sat up it sounded more like the rumbling sound small marbles make. Mice, I thought, or rats, and surprisingly the thought seemed to calm me further. I stood up and the badly fixed floorboards under my feet creaked. As I stepped over to the light coming through the gap and was about to draw back the curtains, the door behind me was yanked open and a firm, determined voice, just

loud and calm enough to show it was used to giving orders, said in a rather posh English accent:

“I wouldn’t do that if I were you.”

At least it wasn’t German, thank God for that, was the first thing that crossed my mind as I turned round. I didn’t have a clue what my current status was, who this man was or what lay in wait for me, but somehow the sound of upper-class English was reassuring. It reminded me of years I had spent in various schools for children of diplomats around the world.

The man, going slightly grey, probably around fifty, tanned, slim and visibly fit, stood in the doorway. He wore an elegant suit, but wore it very casually. His movements did not betray any uptight restlessness, but showed him to be pleasantly relaxed.

“Though we did manage to disperse them and move you to a safe place, making sure we covered any tracks behind us, I cannot eliminate the possibility – slight as it is – that someone followed us and is now creeping around here. One never knows,” he said and closed the door, switched the light on, walked over to the table and sat in one of the armchairs. “And these people are, as you have yourself found out, capable of anything. So it would be better if, for the time being at least, until we make quite sure that you are out of any danger, you avoid appearing at the window. I suggest you join me here at the table and we have a little chat,” he gestured with his hand towards the second armchair.

“Chat!” I got annoyed. Over the last couple of hours (that was what I assumed; in reality I didn’t have a clear idea about how long I had passed out for) I had been abducted, twice beaten to unconsciousness and had had bullets whizzing within inches of my head and explosions going off left, right and centre. I was still not sure what it was all about (the only thing I could think of was that it had something to do with my regressions), I didn’t know who my abductors were, didn’t have the faintest idea who this man in front of me was or indeed where I was, and we were supposed to “have a little chat!”

I could not hide the anger which overcame me at that moment and, quite without intending to, I sharply and sullenly barked at him: “I don’t chat with abductors.”

As soon as I had said it I was sorry and I cursed my hot-tempered self that so often got me into trouble. Not only had the man been perfectly polite with me so far, I didn’t know whether he was friend or foe, or of course, whether I could afford to speak to him in this manner. Fortunately he remained absolutely calm. More so, he patiently and understandingly smiled and said almost cheerfully:

“Quite correct, one does not chat with abductors. But we are not your kidnappers, rather we are, as you have probably guessed, your rescuers. And I am sure you would like to find out more, so please ...” he politely pointed to the armchair next to him.

He elegantly avoided embarrassing me with his relaxed politeness. Almost grateful I sat down in the chair.

“Do you smoke?” he offered me his cigarette case.

“No thank you.”

“Of course, Professor Martin, your lungs,” he slapped his forehead and thoughtfully returned the cigarette he was already holding with his lips to the case he then slipped back into the inside pocket of his jacket.

“My lungs ... Professor Martin” – blood shot to my head. How did this man know my name? Not only my name! How did he know I was a professor? Who told him about the problems I was having with my lungs? The amount of personal detail about my life the German kidnappers had known had given me the creeps, and now it seemed the same was happening here.

“Who are you, damn it?” I snapped uncontrollably. “How come you know all this information about me? Moreover, why did you pick me? What have I done that makes me a worthy target?”

Again my interlocutor remained calm and unaffected.

“Of course, I quite understand you,” he said quietly in an almost overly considerate and slightly worried voice, “and I assure you that you shall be given answers to all your questions. That is precisely what I am here for. May I begin by explaining that it was of course not we who chose you as a target. All we are doing is protecting you from those for whom you have, unfortunately, indeed become the main target.”

“But why?” I cried, “Why me? And who? Who considers me a target? What have I done for anyone to want me out of the way? Terrorists? The Red Brigades?”

“You could say they are terrorists,” he said, “but certainly not the Red Brigades.”

“Who then?”

He stayed silent for a while. His hand automatically reached for his inside pocket and his cigarette case, but mid movement he stopped and returned it to its former position. He looked at me inquisitively, thought about something for a while and then spoke:

“Have you heard of the *Hakenkreuz*?”

I thought for a while. This smelt like it could be something out of my own field of study and I didn’t want to look absolutely ignorant or a charlatan. I knew about the *Rosenkreuzer* or Rosicrucianists or the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross as they called themselves, a freemason fraternity that was, as I vaguely recall, founded somewhere towards the end of the sixteenth or early seventeenth century.

But *Hakenkreuz*? I understood the word *Hakenkreuz*, which was German for hooked cross or swastika, recognized since the Second World War as the most notorious of symbols, if not globally, at least in the western world. Through postgraduate lectures I also had a vague idea about the pre-Hitlerian history of the symbol that played an important role in certain religions as well as religious art. But I was unaware of anything like it still in existence and, in the barrage of New Age cults and organisations, had never come across such a group associated with this controversial symbol.

“Are you perhaps referring to young skinheads in Russia and Germany who beat up foreigners on the anniversary of Hitler’s birthday and have a swastika tattooed on their shaven heads?” I asked, “Of course I have heard of those.”

“I have also heard of them,” he smiled, “but they were not what I had in mind, though you were vaguely close by mentioning Hitler. I am talking about something far more serious, about something that has been kept a well hidden secret from most people, yourself amongst them as I can see. For your own sake it would probably be better that things remain this way, but after all this it is quite impossible to keep it so. It seems you are mixed up in the Hakenkreuzer story right up to your neck, so it seems best that I enlighten you about these things.”

I got upset. How was I involved in some occult stuff associated with the malevolent swastika? How could this be? I never delved into such things, avoided them even at university, and all my archaeological interests ever since puberty were of a more realistic nature. This was also the reason I hesitated so long before deciding to give regression therapy a try. Of course in archaeology one is bound to come across the odd account of secret communions and occult beliefs, of mystic signs and ancient forbidden ceremonies or even remnants of some of these that survive to this day. At an archaeology conference in Rio de Janeiro I once even joined a small private spiritual séance where the only participants were attendees at the conference, all serious scientists and not some voodoo shamans or fanatical occult activists. A few of us had probably had a couple of drinks too many and were interested in how it worked in practice, but in archaeology ‘Indianajonesism’, as we called it, never really attracted me.

“What do you mean – mixed up?” I asked in a rather unsure voice.

“It will all be clear in a moment, but please allow me to explain from the beginning.”

He moved into a more comfortable position and began to talk. He spoke for a long time and it seemed that, in a way, he enjoyed talking. He gave the impression of a lecturer rather fond of listening to his own voice in front of an audience, satisfied in being considered as someone who is presumed to know everything. Were I to meet him in other circumstances, I would have been convinced he was a university lecturer.

“I shall not tire you with Hakenkreuzer prehistory, after all that is of no importance whatsoever to the situation in which you appear to have landed yourself. It is useful, however, if I do briefly explain about the origins and later development of the organisation. Based on your education I assume that you have some idea at least about what Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was like. Only a few years had passed since Columbus had discovered the New World; people only reluctantly accepted that beyond the trustworthy homely world they knew lay a foreign and unknown vastness, and then up comes Copernicus claiming that it isn’t Earth that is at the centre of the universe, but the Sun. This was all a great shock. Trust in any kind of certainty fell to the lowest possible level. Add to this the plague in England and you will not be surprised to find that people’s trust in everything, including God, was shattered. It is not surprising therefore that this is when the Lutheran movement started in Germany which eventually, amongst other things, lead to the Anglican break with Rome.”

I became slightly impatient. I could see no sense in this lecture. After all, I was a professor of archaeology and knew my history rather well, probably better than this man in front of me, who on the one hand appeared cultivated and almost aristocratic, but on the other was, himself, in some way or another, either on the right or the wrong side of the law, clearly

involved in events that were more fit for an action film. So I could not help myself from interrupting him:

“Excuse me, but I am well aware of all this,” I continued in a rather arrogant manner, “and fully comprehend the spiritual and historical context of the era, after all I did study these things.”

He smiled. “Of course, Professor, of course, I got carried away, please excuse me. I will move on,” he continued with a voice that clearly displayed a degree of ridicule, “to the actual matter at hand. So, to Avignon, which, in the first half of the sixteenth century, was contested by German emperors and French kings. At the time it was full of German bourgeoisie and influential people, amongst them a certain Count Joachim von Hakenkreuz. An interesting name, isn’t it?” he said when he noticed I flinched, “but you have to remember that the swastika at the time did not have the history or the implication it has today, so the name was no different to any other. Von Hakenkreuz had a tidy estate in the small town of Jouques and also – probably in order to be close to the available sources of knowledge – maintained a house in Avignon. He stayed alternately in one place and the other, mostly in Avignon in fact, though he liked to introduce himself as the Hereditary Count of Jouques. This man was in fact interested in similar things to yourself: ancient cultures, customs and traditions, ancient and modern languages and things like that. Amongst other things he engaged in the history of symbols, and he is known to have tried to decipher some of the then still unreadable runes and the Inca writing system of knotted threads that Pizarro had recently brought back from Peru – apparently he was successful, though he never announced his discoveries publicly but kept his findings to himself. He was a well educated man who followed developments in all areas of knowledge, and was also amongst the first to begin to doubt the authority of the institutions at the time.

In around 1550, whilst intensively studying the writings of Machiavelli, Melanchthon and Leonardo da Vinci, he had some thoughts that would not give him peace. He founded a secret organisation which, much like other such secret organisations, aimed to eventually prevail in the world, or to use his own words, to return to the world its meaning, make it clear, intelligible, perceivable and manageable. He had also devised a secret plan of how to realize this aim. Members of the fraternity were aware that this was not an act that could be carried out over night, so they were prepared to align their activities in a way that would, in accordance with this plan, bear results – certain results – at some point in the distant future when the time was right. They adopted very strict rules in a conspiracy of silence (so for centuries the organisation remained absolutely secret), and for their identifiable symbol they chose the swastika, the hooked cross. They introduced their own calendar. 1503 was their Year 0, the year Leonardo da Vinci began to paint his Mona Lisa, for it was precisely in this work of art that they recognized the secret signs and images that supposedly prophesized their final aim.”

“So we are now in Year 507 according to the Da Vinci calendar.” I interrupted him with a slight sarcasm in my voice.

He flinched as if someone had pricked him with a knitting needle and looked at me piercingly, sending a chill down my spine. But it only lasted a second, moments later his gaze softened again.

“Fifty and seven, yes, this meaningful combination, very much connected to this secret pledge,” he said. “We shall come to that in a while. But do allow me to continue. The Hakenkreuzer conspiracy was truly unusual. What contributed to this was that in some aspects the project remained a family affair; the male Von Hakenkreuz heir was always the leader of the organisation. And they made sure there were plenty available. They married into noble homes. After establishing family ties with the Princely House of Thurn and Taxis, they expanded their activities all over Europe, but managed to maintain their secrecy right up until 1933 when their operations became public and it seemed as if the implementation of their plan had finally started, so it made sense to begin to operate in full public view, though I am actually unable to tell you much more about this.”

I was astonished. “In 1933! But that is ... am I correctly understanding that you want to tell me that ...”

“I do not want to tell you anything,” he continued in his serious neutral tone, “I am merely relating what happened. Yes, in 1933, or year 430 according to their calendar. This was when Hitler was appointed German Chancellor.”

“But,” I interrupted him again, “the National Socialist Party was, if I remember correctly, officially founded back in 1919! And the hooked cross, the emblem of Hakenkreuzer, was adopted as the party official symbol as early as 1920! So they went public much earlier than 1933! – No, sir, this won’t do. Secret plans, freemasonry, swastikas, Nazis, juggling with numbers, dates and years – we have seen it all before! I do not know what you are contriving to, or why you are wasting your time and going into all this trouble to fabricate this story,” I said, ever more agitated, “but this time you found your match. I must admit, you managed to confuse me to start with, but I am no fool. So ... well, how can I put it ... thank you, thank you very much indeed for saving me from the hands of those brutes. I am not sure who I am thanking of course, whether you are the CIA, the MI6, Mossad, the National Security Service? A special antiterrorist unit? But I do not really care, the main thing is that you saved me. So, I truly thank you once again. You were a pleasant conversationalist, but I would rather not go any deeper into these waters with you. Please allow me, I am leaving.”

I stood up and made my way to the door. To be honest I didn’t believe he would just allow me to leave. He had been speaking too seriously, he had given me too much attention and he had, if there was a single grain of truth to all his claptrap, given me far too much information to just allow me to leave like this. As I approached the door I bent over slightly, expecting another strike over the back of my head such as I had become used to over the past few days.

But nothing happened. The man didn’t say anything; I heard no quick steps behind me, no barking of orders into a transceiver, nothing at all. I grabbed the door handle decisively and was about to open the door when I heard his characteristically calm, quiet and confident voice say:



“Come, my friend, come with me, I’ll drop you off on the other side of the river.”  
Taken aback I let go of the door handle as if struck by electricity. Familiar images rolled before my eyes.

## Chapter seven

*The carriage rattled along the road. The breeze created by its speed was barely able to lessen the heat of the sun. I urged the driver to increase our pace and get to our destination as soon as possible. The Teacher’s message disturbed me. It said I should report without delay. Something terrible must have happened.*

*The Teacher lived by the river on the opposite bank. I lived only a shot away from his house, yet it would take me at least an hour to get there. The bridge was far away. At that moment I spotted a young farmer untying his boat down by the riverside. I shouted to the driver to stop. I ordered him to drive his carriage into the shade of some nearby trees and wait for me to return. I would probably be back before nightfall.*

*I approached the farmer and was about to ask him to give me a ride to the other side, but he beat me to it. I heard his calm, quiet and confident voice say:*

*“Come, my friend, come with me, I’ll drop you off on the other side of the river.”*

*The words stunned me. He must have recognized from my attire that I was the town judge’s assistant and must have seen the carriage bearing the insignia of the town court. He should have addressed me as at least ‘Your Honour’ and certainly not as ‘my friend’. But at that moment I didn’t have time for such things, I was in a hurry to report to the Teacher. I nodded somberly in acceptance of his offer. Only once I stepped onto the boat did I realise there was someone else on it, a foreigner. He had a refined, scholarly looking face and wore elegant clothes, just like myself, far too sophisticated for the simple craft he was sitting in.*

*“So you, Sir, are also taking the shortcut?” I asked politely when I sat down beside him and the young boatman pushed the boat away from the riverbank with his oar.*

*“Never the shortcut, always the path we are destined to take,” he said rather enigmatically, and when he saw the surprised and somewhat suspicious look on my face, he smiled.*

*“It’s another half an hour’s ride to the bridge and I am on my way to over there,” he pointed to a village snugly surrounding a church on the opposite bank of the river.*

*The current wasn’t strong and we were only being gently carried down the river, something the boatman handled with great ease. I thought about what my fellow passenger had said, but made little sense of his words, so I started thinking about other things. I was worried about the Teacher. He was the one who used to look after me in all respects, but now he was frail and I was*



*still young enough and held a respectable position. This time it was my turn to reciprocate for all the years of benevolence and kindness he had shown me.*

*We were halfway across when I noticed the young boatman and my fellow passenger glance at each other in a strange way. The elegant stranger politely asked me whether he could move to the bow, facing the boatman, since the rocking of the boat made him feel sick. I automatically leaned towards the edge of the boat to make room for him, when he forcefully pushed me over – and I ended up in the water.*

*The heavy outfit of the second assistant to the town judge pulled me towards the bottom. The cold water penetrated every pore in my clothing, mercilessly reaching my skin. I tore off my gold livery collar that clung round my neck, undid my heavy belt on which I wore a shortsword and with wild strokes pushed myself towards the light above me. Falling in I had swallowed some water and was running out of air. I used all my strength to reach the surface when I received a horrific blow over the head with an oar. All went dark before my eyes. Thick slime started to invade me as I sunk into the dark mud. It was all over in an instant.*

## Chapter eight

“How did you find out?!”

I still stood by the door, but turned round to face him. I stared at him in disbelief. I still could not comprehend how it was possible. How was it possible that this man, whom I had only just met half an hour earlier in highly peculiar circumstances, knew things no one else apart from me and Barbara knew? How could this stranger standing in front of me, whose name I didn't even know, know what I experienced in one of my recent regressions?

He didn't answer, just looked at me quietly.

I stepped towards him.

“Tell me, or else ...” I tried to sound threatening.

His lips curled slightly into something that hinted at a smile.

“Or else?” he asked as if out of curiosity.

I realized the absurdity of my threat. Not only had I been knocked out twice over the past couple of days, kidnapped and beaten up, not only had this man really not given me any occasion for violent behaviour, but he was also probably not a man whom one would want to get into a fight with. True, he didn't look particularly strong, but he was sure to be some master of martial arts or some alternative skill. After all, it was he and his colleagues who, with daring actions that exceeded any of my own abilities and perceptions, tore me from the clutches of my dangerous abductors.

Somewhat sobered up, I sat back down in the armchair opposite him.

He waited for a few moments and then said in the same tone he had been using previously:

“It shall all become clear, I promise. All I ask of you is a little patience. May I continue?”

I nodded in silence.

“So, in this well guarded plan that the organisation passed down through the generations, there was mention of the secret holy number seven. I probably do not need to elaborate on the extreme significance of this number? As you are aware, God created the world in seven days; then we have the Seven Hills of Rome, the seven so called ‘liberal arts’, there were seven years of plenty and seven years of famine in the Bible, seven deadly sins, seven days of the week, seven chakras, seven branches on a menorah, the list goes on *ad infinitum*. Well, with this number the date of implementation of the great plan was predicted. The numerical sum of the date 430 is seven.”

“But,” I jumped and could not hide the sarcasm in my voice, “but this is absolutely random! We can come to the same sum with a whole number of dates, 403, 412, 421, to mention only those close to the date used, all of them adding up to seven! How did they recognize 430 as the right date?”

As soon as I had said this I became worried. Again I could not control myself, again I was unable to hold my tongue. Again I had offended him. Now I waited, afraid of how he might react.

He sighed and sat back in the armchair. He was silent for a few moments and then patiently, as if nothing had happened, continued.

“The plan devised by Von Hakenkreuz and his comrades in the mid sixteenth century was all but simple. To keep it secret it was not only necessary to conceal it, but also to keep expanding it. Amongst other things, Von Hakenkreuz also carefully studied the Kabala and managed, with his ingenuity, to devise a sort of cybernetic, self-constructing mechanism. His idea was for the plan to self-expand from the moment of its inception until it reached perfection, until it matured. And this is how things were treated.”

“I do not understand,” I said bluntly. I really didn’t.

“That is how it was intended,” the man turned towards me with a smile that was unable to hide his admiration of such a conception. “Only the anointed few were intended to understand. You, it seems, are not one of them.”

I didn’t say anything. I didn’t know how to answer him, and he continued.

“The idea itself was, in all its details, not that original, but as a whole it certainly was. Von Hakenkreuz conceived the plan in the form of a short passage that subsequent generations of Hakenkreuzer studied and deliberated. These explanations amassed, conflicting and complementing one another, each new explanation emerging from previous studies, becoming more and more complicated over the centuries, but at the same time also more considered and clear. Von Hakenkreuz was convinced that the plan would mature when all its interpretations converged into one single interpretation. As far as an alternative interpretation existed, his view was that the plan still had room for improvement.”

“And then it happened. In 1933,” I said without being certain that my voice would not betray my scornful scepticism.

“No, not in 1933,” he answered patiently. “In 1914. In that year one of Joachim von Hakenkreuz’s direct descendants, a certain Wolfgang von Hakenkreuz, managed to find an interpretation that could explain and envelop all previous ones, and no one was able to refute it. The plan had matured. I do not know all the details, but what is certain is that he managed to find a combination that numerologically connected the dates according to both calendars, the Hakenkreuz one and our usual one, and also fit this in with the plan.”

“I see no connection or correlation whatsoever,” I said.

“Of course not, it is not that simple an operation, though in terms of how it is calculated it is fairly simple once you know which dates we are looking at and when you know the symbolic value of the numbers. I will try to explain it slowly and gradually so it will be as clear as possible. The year 1933 is of special importance because it contains the number 33. This is not only the date of Christ’s death, and thus one of the most well known dates in world history, but is also the number of the highest level any member of numerous orders of freemason, including the Hakenkreuzer, can reach. This is one of the signs that this date could be the right one. What is more important is this: according to the Hakenkreuzer calendar this is the year 430 and the numerical sum of this date is, as we have already established, seven. As you also know, this is not only a special number in its own right, it is also a key number in Joachim’s plan. Amazing, isn’t it? But for the rigorous spirit of the Hakenkreuzer this was not

enough. The solution needed further verification and needed to be provable on all accounts. Wolfgang derived this proof, or rather confirmation, in the following manner. He first asked himself which, amongst all possible categories of numbers, contained two most closely related - holy, so to say - numbers. The answer was the category of dates. This was a clear enough indication that what is important is the date, and that the confirmation should be sought in looking for suitable dates. So Wolfgang did the following: he took the year 1933 and added up the numbers it is composed of, getting a new number 16. Then he took another meaningful date, the key date in the history of the Hakenkreuzer, Year 0 according to their calendar, 1503 in our terms, and also carried out the same operation, getting number nine. Sixteen minus nine is of course seven, the number from the plan. Even Doubting Thomas would have considered this proof enough, but Wolfgang wanted to be absolutely sure, so he continued. He hacked away at this key Hakenkreuzer date, the year 1503. He performed the following simple mathematical operation: he divided 1503 into two groups 150 and 3. He divided 150 by 3 and got 50. From this he deducted 1 and got 49. The square root of 49 is 7 – so again, the number that appears in the plan. All these results, all these connections were far too meaningful to be coincidental. It seemed that, any way you tackle it, the year 1933 points to the fateful number seven and that this is the correct explanation of the plan.”

I could no longer hold back and burst out laughing.

“That’s a good joke! I haven’t heard anything this amusing in ages! You take one date and use a certain key to explain it, then you take another date and use an entirely different method. Then you find out that it is not only the ‘content’ that is important but also the ‘shape’, meaning that the fact that the number represents a year is also important, so in a manner worthy of a magician performing tricks you pull out from somewhere a third year, connect it to the first date and recalculate it according to a third, entirely different key. Then you try to bring the third date itself to fit the common denominator, but it doesn’t quite fit. So what do you do? Since the numbers don’t work out exactly, you simply deduct one and all is fine, the equation works! Haha, I really did not expect something as dumb as this from you, Sir. And you actually believe this stuff?!”

He went red in the face. It was obvious that he was really furious and for a moment I thought he would strike me, but he didn’t; obviously he could control himself far better than I could.

“One who has the complete argument in front of them, one who knows the system and the mentality, one who has meticulously gone over the complete tradition of explanations, sees something in it. You yourself, it seems, don’t. You mock the whole idea. The Hakenkreuzer were neither madmen nor utopians. They were realists. Their plan was realistic and was not intended to be completed in a few millennia. To them a millennium, regardless of what calendar they used, was far too long a period. From the time of their establishment all the numbers in the years of our own calendar kept changing, only the one at the beginning remained the same. That was to them as if it did not exist. After all it didn’t exist in their own calendar. Not only because it was too recent, but because, through a process of continuous interpretation, they came to the conclusion in the mid nineteenth century that in their

counting there would never be a number that did not change; such a number made no sense in a measurement of time. Time itself changes continuously and it needs to be represented with symbols that do the same. The first number in the years according to our calendar, the one signifying the millennium, didn't exist in theirs from the beginning. In the mode of thinking of the Hakenkreuzer, the fact that Wolfgang deducted this one from the sum was quite natural and went without saying, much as to you, in your system, fifty is fifty. From their point of view this is not necessarily so. With appropriate reasoning fifty can also be forty nine."

He fell silent. I also didn't say anything. I felt it would be unwise to try his patience again. When I opened my mouth I would have to think about what I was going to say first. Of course the whole thing still seemed rather far-fetched. The explanation was not rational but rather dogmatic, typical of ideologies and religious sects. And this seemed to be such a case, though it did seem that this realistic man, who had been talking to me in a very rational way, considered these things rather serious. I needed to be tactful.

"But," I started carefully, "the predicted date was 1933 and we also talked about other dates, 1914, for example."

"Yes, about 1914. That was when the plan was first understood correctly and the precise time it would begin to function was figured out. But you should understand that a plan on such a grand scale is no simple thing. Conquering the world is quite different to playing a game of dominoes. That is why the plan needed the appropriate preparations; they could not just sit and wait for 1933 and the plan to be put into effect of its own accord. With respect to the era in which they were operating, they decided the easiest way to implement the plan was with the help of politics. They planned the establishment of a political party that would first take control of the country and then move on to rule the world."

"But the party, as you know yourself, was not established until 1919."

In 1914 the First World War started and the creation of a new party had to be put on hold. But something more fateful happened. Wolfgang was killed in one of the last battles on the Isonzo front and the Hakenkreuzer were left without a leader."

I wanted to ask him where he got all his information from - a moment ago he maintained that very little was known about the activities of the Hakenkreuzer before 1933 - but managed to hold back. I did not want to irritate him with my impetuosity. I continued to listen.

"So they worked according to the plan that Wolfgang had devised in 1914. They established a party and chose one of their followers who seemed most suitable as its leader. But this is where things started going wrong."

"You are probably referring to the fact that the Germans lost the war."

"No, no, the war was over by then. The problem was elsewhere. A few months before his death, towards the end of 1916, Wolfgang fathered a son, an heir who would, according to the established rules of the fraternity, take over the Hakenkreuzer leadership when he turned twenty. But the man they chose as leader of the party until Wolfgang's young son was able to take over, Adolf Hitler, had become far too fond of power to want to just vacate the post when the time came. Actually he did not abandon the basic Hakenkreuzer idea and was faithfully

following instructions when in 1933, according to plan, the first move was made towards absolute world domination. But in 1937, when he was supposed to step down and pass the reigns to Wolfgang's son Ludovic, he refused to do so. Worse, what emerged was that in the meantime he had created his own organization which had little in common with the Hakenkreuzer other than the swastika as its symbol and the plan. Hitler rejected and even persecuted everything else, the rules, the tradition and his former Hakenkreuzer brothers. A great number of them ended up in concentration camps.

"What happened with Hitler, you of course know very well yourself," he said with a slight intonation in his voice. I pricked up my ears. Can he possibly know about this too? But he continued talking: "What you probably are not aware of is that with Hitler's death the Hakenkreuzer movement by no means died out, in either name or spirit. Let me first tell you about the 'spirit'. When Ludovic saw what was happening he realized he was himself in danger and moved abroad with the rare few supporters still alive in Europe. There they decided to continue with the original idea. The plan devised by Joachim had, through Hitler's intervention, gained a different meaning and required new interpretations. How far they got with these interpretations and how close the plan came to reaching perfection once again, we are unable to say. What is known is that if the movement wished to continue the original tradition that had been irreparably tarnished by Hitler's Hakenkreuzer, it had to change its name. Ludovic himself also had to do the same, since he could certainly not keep his original surname after what went on before and during the Second World War. He still wanted to keep some connection to the name, since members of the fraternity attributed special powers to the name itself, so he chose a new, similar sounding, but totally different name: Von Hagenkrise. And the followers accordingly called themselves Hagenkrisenists"

"Sounds slightly Dutch to me," I commented.

"It isn't," he answered. "In Irish tradition the boy's name 'Hagen' means small or young. With this, the former Hakenkreuz pointed to the fact that this was a young, fresh, as yet small variation of the former organisation. The second part of the name also has a meaning and is also not Dutch. It is taken from the Russian word for rat, 'krisa'."

"Hmm," I said, "that is highly unusual."

"Why unusual?" he responded. "Many surnames are derived from names of animals.

"Fair enough, but – rat? Is that not a somewhat vulgar choice for the name of such a respected noble clan?"

"Quite the opposite," he said – I did think he was being a little too serious, almost solemn – "I see you have also succumbed to the common, not to repeat the word 'vulgar', prejudices. It is true that today, to most people, the rat is a dirty creature, a carrier of diseases that prefers to live in sewage pipes and gnaws through electrical and telephone wiring and is in most cases nothing but trouble. But believe me, rats are underestimated. Very few people today are aware of the important role this animal played in many cultures. One of Apollo's epithets is derived from the word for rat. To the Japanese it is a symbol of fertility and wealth – to the Chinese also. Then we have the Chinese Year of the Rat, which I want you to take particular note of in connection to the Chinese symbol 子 that represents it. At first glance,



this is almost identical to our own numeral 7, and you already know how central a role this had for the Hakenkreuzer. And if you have ever meddled in lunar astrology you will also know that the month of the rat is between the 7<sup>th</sup> of December and the 7<sup>th</sup> of January. Sevens again!

“And this is not all,” he continued passionately – the sudden change was rather apparent, his enthusiasm did not match the calm and indifferent voice with which he had spoken up to that point – “it does not only reflect the symbolic role of these tiny creatures, but their incredible abilities acknowledged and researched by science today. And here I am not referring to laboratory rats which, together with lab mice and the proverbial rabbits, are merely what is usually referred to as the ‘cannon fodder’ of scientific research. I have something quite different in mind. You must have heard that all these tiny rodents left the Titanic before it sailed from Southampton on its fatal journey. I am just giving you a well known example that you are probably aware of yourself. I can list thousands of others; the Globe Star, the SMS Königsberg, the HMS Pegasus, the Méduse – the same has been reported for all of them!

To summarise in brief,” he reverted to the manners of a university lecturer, “rats seem to have the gift of seeing the future, the gift of foretelling events. And this is perhaps why it is not that difficult to understand why the former Count von Hakenkreuz chose such a name.”

At this point he must, himself, have realized that he had become too passionate. The flame in his eyes died down, and for a moment I even had the impression it was replaced by something evil, but he immediately regained his calm stance and continued in a serene voice:

“Of course many other stories have been spun from legends, but you know how these things are, one should not believe everything. I would even say most of it, and that very little of what you are likely to hear about the Hagenkrisenists is actually true. And you are sure to hear a great deal now that you have waded so deep into these things, so I thought it necessary to give you at least this basic information.”

“All this is completely new to me,” I said carefully, “and I actually do not really know what to make of it all. I still do not understand how you could possibly know about ...”

“You will find out right away,” he interrupted me. “Just now we were talking about the Hakenkreuzer in spirit, the Hagenkrisenists. In fact you can forget about them because far more fateful in your case are the Hakenkreuzer in name, meaning the organisation on which Hitler left his seal. It was they who kidnapped you and who are now threatening your life.”

I groaned. I still could not get used to the idea that my life was in danger. I still could not accept that I had become fatefully involved in some kind of conspiracy with which I had absolutely no business and which I did not care for at all. My entire life had been shaken up for a second time recently and this time I was not sure I would be able to handle it like the first time when I somehow managed with Barbara’s help.

My conversational partner, as it seemed, was not particularly interested in my personal troubles. In a calm, almost instructive voice, he continued:

“During the first two years of the war it looked as if Hitler might get away with his plan and some of the traditional Hakenkreuzer started to wonder whether they didn’t misjudge him and whether he might indeed be the one who would implement such a carefully prepared and



thought out plan. But then, as you know, things went wrong. The plan started going sour, and in the end Hitler was left with little choice but to commit suicide. But you know all this far better than I do," he added in a meaningful voice.

This time I could not just let it pass. His allusions were obvious and could not be misinterpreted. In fact they were far more than allusions, the matter was crystal clear. First the comment about me knowing what happened to Hitler and now this. There was no doubt. He knew. He knew everything. I tried in vain to hide my great excitement. In a trembling voice I managed to assert rather than inquire:

"Of course you are referring to one of my supposed past lives ..."

He smiled. "You can call it whatever you wish. That is a matter of interpretation. But, yes, I am referring to what you relived in one of your regressions. Let me remind you. It was 1945..."

## Chapter ten

*It was 1945. The final battle for Berlin was drawing to a close. In the bunker were My Führer with a few of his closest friends; Doctor Goebbels with his family, Eva Braun and others. And us, his soldiers.*

*Despite the horrific resounding noise of bombs from outside, we felt relatively safe inside the bunker ...*