

Chapter 20

Macy Collier awakened from a deep sleep. For a lone female intelligence agent, security was of prime importance. Although her one story, two bedroom house was modest by American standards, it contained one of the most sophisticated security systems ever conceived.

A small pillow speaker emitted a rhythmical high pitched squeal whose frequency had been customized to her hearing spectrum. Inaudible to the intruder, it allowed Macy the time to react before her chosen zone of safety, the bedroom, was compromised. Quickly reaching under her pillow, she retrieved a small Glock 9mm pistol and rolled off her bed to its far side. The maneuver afforded her a commanding view of the room's solitary entrance, while allowing the bed and darkness to act as a shield. Attached to the adjacent night stand, within arm's-reach, was a cell phone on constant charge. Kneeling, she reached under the bed, placed her fingers around a cold, black flashlight boasting halogen intensity, withdrew it and

held it in her empty hand and waited.

A small, color coded L.E.D. encrusted panel blinked on the wall opposite her position. It monitored the path taken by an intruder as he passed through a series of invisible laser beams. A red L.E.D., larger than the rest, was now constantly lit. The beam outside the bedroom door had been interrupted. She tightened her grip on the glock and prepared to blind the intruder with the halogen light the instant the door opened. It remained closed. Instead, a familiar Arab voice whispered her name. "Macy, it is I," Barak announced. "Do not shoot!"

"What are you doing sneaking into my house and at this hour?" she said with a stern voice fueled by adrenalin.

"Open the door, we must talk," he said, in Arabic.

Slowly, she rose from her protective position, the flashlight lit and held to one side, while she pointed the Glock menacingly towards the door. "Tell me exactly what we did the last time we met," she demanded, through the closed door and gritted teeth.

"I screwed your brains out with your legs over my shoulders."

She unlocked the door, still pointing the gun towards its opening and stepped back. Barak entered, his hands raised and empty, hair disheveled and sweat dripping from his brow. "Start talking," she said, in her best Arabic.

Barak walked towards the bed and playfully tested it with his hand. "Is much better than our little meeting place."

"Never mind that, how did you find me?" she asked, the gun still pointed at his head.

"It was not difficult."

“If you came for a roll in the hay, I’ve got a headache.”

Barak grunted and sat down on the edge of the bed. “I wish it were that simple,” he replied.

Lowering the gun, she lifted a robe from a nearby chair and hastily wrapped it around her body. “Let’s go to another room and talk,” she said.

“Why not here?” he protested.

“My territory, my terms—the kitchen, this way,” she said, gesturing.

“Do you want something to drink?” she asked, her hand on the refrigerator door.

“Strong alcohol, if you have it.”

Wondering what terrible scenario would drive a devout Islamist to drink, she poured three ounces of her best Scotch whiskey into a water glass and passed it to him. He took a hasty gulp. “Sit down and listen,” he said, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand.

She pulled out a chair opposite his and sat while he took a second gulp.

“We may be in great danger.” he warned, somewhat melodramatically. “You have probably wondered how I have been able to provide you with information about the A.I.F.?”

“Yes, the question has crossed my mind.”

“Here is the answer. My half brother, Mahmud, is their leader.”

“Half brother?”

“Do not interrupt. He is aware of our meetings and has become angry with me. He claims that I have not brought him any useful information and accuses me, imagine that, of working for the infidels.”

“He cannot possibly have any proof,” she reassured, while realizing that the timing

might be right to completely turn him.

“You don’t understand, he doesn’t need any.”

Macy rose, moved to his side and pressed his head against her breasts. “I’m sure we can find a solution.”

“Unless I can prove myself useful, I fear he has already made up his mind. His people will seek us out.”

“What if you did not return to Palestine?”

Raising his head, he turned to face her with a quizzical expression. “What are you suggesting?” he asked.

“You could stay here. We could protect you.”

“Who is we? I don’t know for sure who you work for. You are like the chameleon, you change sides like he changes color.”

“Israel is my home, Barak. The Mossad can protect you.”

“There is no escape. You cannot punish where pain brings glory nor threaten death when it promises to bring eternal life. My brothers have no fear. If one fails others will come.” After a moment of reflection, he added, “Some infidels speak of heaven and hell. Well, if such exists, we are surely in hell right now and only heaven can follow.”

Macy turned, walked to the cupboard and removed a glass. Walking back to the table, she filled it with Scotch, took a drink and sat down. “What if I were to provide you with some valuable information?”

“It might convince him of my loyalty. What do you require in exchange?”

“More of that,” she said, while pointing to his groin, “and an in-kind exchange of

intelligence.”

He hesitated for a moment as he drained his glass, gesturing for a refill. “What do you want to know?” he asked.

“On our last visit, you mentioned your brother’s interest in a certain American doctor. What do they have planned?”

Barak rolled the glass between his fingers. “The information you have for me is genuine?” he asked.

“Yes.”

“I have not been trusted with the details of his plan but I have heard that it has already been put in motion.”

“Why has this man been singled out?”

“He is responsible for the death of our cousin, Jamal Taroob, the previous leader of the A.I.F., but I have already told you that,” he barked.

“I must know what they have planned,” she said, with an authoritative tone.

“I will try—now, it is your turn.”

She did her best to provide a snippet of valid intelligence with limited potential for harm. Afterwards, she pointed him towards the shower, allowed a sufficient amount of time for him to wash and then joined him, while thinking to herself, I’ll turn the bastard yet.