

AN ABSOLUTE
SECRET

BY

NICHOLAS KINSEY

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In memory of my mother
Winifred Mary Pryce

FOREWORD

I am a Canadian and British writer and director of film and television drama and this novel started as a television mini-series project in six episodes. Hopefully it will one day become a successful television drama and will be seen around the world, but in the meantime readers can enjoy this great spy thriller in book form. It takes the reader on an exciting ride through wartime intelligence operations when Stockholm was a bourse for foreign intelligence and German war booty.

Solid historical research went into writing this novel, which was inspired by W. Hugh Thomas' investigative work entitled *The Strange Death of Heinrich Himmler*, the 'White Buses' operation organized by Count Folke Bernadotte to save the Scandinavian prisoners of German concentration camps, the secret negotiations between *SS-Brigadeführer* Walter Schellenberg and the Swedish, British and American governments at the end of the war and numerous books on SOE and MI6 operations in Sweden. This novel is based on a lot of well-known facts and, of course, when the facts are not available the writer's job is to invent. This book remains a work of historical fiction.

MAIN CHARACTERS

The British:

Peter Faye, MI6 agent and Consular Services officer
Bridget Potter, Consular Services officer
Bernie Dixon, Legation documents officer
Ewan Butler, SOE officer and press attaché
Joanna Dunn, SOE officer and assistant to Butler
Michael Tennant, SOE officer and press attaché
Sir Victor Mallet, Chief of the British Legation
Anthony Blunt, MI5 officer
Major Keith Linwood, MI6 officer
Jane Archer, Soviet counterintelligence expert
Dorothy Furse, SOE Head of Personnel in London
Mary Butler, Ewan's wife

The Swedes:

Anders Berger, journalist, Stockholms-Tidningen newspaper
Britta, Anders' wife, secretary at the Enskilda Bank
Count Folke Bernadotte, Swedish Red Cross executive
Gustav Lundquist, Stockholms-Tidningen newspaper
Sabrina, Bernie's wife
Aksell, Sabrina's father and music composer
Stefan, photographer, Stockholms-Tidningen newspaper
Vincent Ansell, Swedish trade officer at the British Legation
Magnus, Sabrina's brother and jeweller
Rolf Lagerman, Britta's brother, prisoner in Germany
Ahlman, senior accountant at the Enskilda bank
Ekstrom, freight manager at the Bromma airfield
Akerson, art dealer and businessman
Felix Kersten, physical therapist to Himmler
Colonel Gottfrid Björck, Swedish military man

The Germans & Austrians:

Dr Karl-Heinz Kramer, *Abwehr* spy and press officer
Eva Kramer, Karl-Heinz's wife

Kriminaldirektor Golcher, *Abwehr* station head
Hanne, Austrian Jew and cleaning woman
Nadja, secretary at the German press office
Elsa Ansell, Vincent Ansell's Austrian wife
SS-Brigadeführer Walter Schellenberg, head of *SD Ausland*
'*Der Grosse*' Federmann, German nightclub owner
Wilhelma, nanny to young Heidi in the Kramer household
Oberleutnant Kemper, informant to Golcher
Gestapo chief Heinrich Müller
Abwehr chief and Admiral Wilhelm Canaris
Obergefreiter Hoffmann, German *Wehrmacht* officer
Hauptman Schultz, Gestapo man
Kriminalinspektor Bauer, Gestapo officer in Stockholm
SS-Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler, head of the RSHA
Hans and Fritz, two young German soldiers

The Soviets:

Soviet Ambassador Alexandra Kollontai
Major Vladimir Petrov, NKVD officer
Evdokia Petrov, NKVD officer and wife to Vladimir
Sasha, NKVD hitman

The Others:

Wanda Hjort, Norwegian social worker
Dr Bjorn Heger, Norwegian medical doctor
Colonel Reino Hallamaa, head of Finnish Radio Intelligence
Wilho Tikander, American OSS station chief in Stockholm
Mads, Finnish adjutant to Colonel Hallamaa
Hendrik, Finnish adjutant to Colonel Hallamaa
Colonel Saarson, Estonian military attaché
General Makoto Onodera, Japanese intelligence officer
GRU, the Soviet military foreign-intelligence service
NKVD, the Soviet secret police service
RTK, the Finnish Intelligence service
Säpo, the Swedish Security service

One

Stockholm, August 1943

A tall, blond intelligence officer with the German *Abwehr* left a reception at the Stockholm Grand Hotel on the arm of an elegant woman, accompanied by a small entourage of thoroughly inebriated German Legation press officers. Together they marched down the hallway towards the exit, singing lewd German songs and brandishing bottles of champagne.

It was a hot summer night as the party left the hotel with its view of the waterfront and the Royal Palace across the strait. A white DKW F8 Cabrio convertible pulled up and a hotel car jockey stepped out, handing the keys to the intelligence officer.

"Gute Nacht, Herr Kramer."

Dr Karl-Heinz Kramer thrust some krona coins into the young man's hand.

"Tack, tack (Thanks)."

In different circumstances Karl-Heinz, in a smart double-breasted suit, and Nadja, in a fashionable red evening gown with her hair in waves and curls, would have made a striking couple, but tonight they were as drunk and dishevelled as the others. Nadja slipped into the front seat next to Karl-Heinz

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while his colleagues piled into the back seat.

A man with a Brownie Hawkeye camera and flashbulb stepped into the road to snap a picture as the DKW convertible took off, but Karl-Heinz just gave him a cheerful wave as he floored the gas pedal and drove away. The photographer swore in frustration and ran towards a waiting car.

Anders Berger tossed his cigarette away and got in behind the wheel as Stefan jumped into the passenger seat. They took off after the Germans. Near the hotel entrance an elegantly-dressed man in a grey fedora watched the journalists leave. He walked to a car parked across the street.

Anders drove at high speed through the dark streets, following the Germans in the white convertible.

"Where do you think they are going?" Anders asked his colleague.

"Who knows? Careful, Anders."

In the rear view mirror Anders noticed a car following them at a distance. The white DKW eventually turned into a park near the canal. Anders stopped his car near the entrance and observed the Germans getting out of their car on a grassy patch near the pier. They stumbled drunkenly towards the water.

Helmut, an athletic-looking young man with a shaved, undercut hairstyle, his fat partner Fritz and skinny consumptive Heinrich followed Karl-Heinz and Nadja towards the pier where several boats were tied up. Nadja struggled to walk in the grass and had to stop to remove her high heels. Karl-Heinz was holding two champagne bottles and some glasses and, by the time Nadja caught up with him, he had managed to fill one of the glasses and was offering it to Helmut.

"Helmut, let's have a drink first."

"I'm ready, Karl-Heinz," Helmut replied.

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Nadja reached out and took the glass from Karl-Heinz.

"Go, Helmut," she smiled. "I won't watch."

Karl-Heinz shrugged and filled the glasses of Fritz and Heinrich. The men yelled encouragement as young Helmut stripped naked in the moonlight. Karl-Heinz filled a glass and handed it to Helmut. This time Helmut took it without protest, downing the champagne in an instant and diving naked into the dark water.

On the pier Karl-Heinz and his friends watched for Helmut's bubbles at the surface of the water. The group became more and more nervous as they counted down the minutes.

"Karl-Heinz, some one must go in. Helmut can drown," Nadja insisted after two minutes without any sign of bubbles.

"Not possible. Helmut is a great swimmer," Karl-Heinz said confidently.

"We must do something, Karl-Heinz."

"But Nadja. I can't swim, nor can Heinrich and Fritz is too drunk and maybe a bit too fat. You are our best swimmer."

Nadja couldn't wait any longer. She hurriedly stripped off her dress and stockings revealing large breasts and a strong, muscled body.

"I will hold your bag. Go on now, save our poor Helmut," Karl-Heinz implored Nadja.

Fritz and Heinrich admired Nadja's magnificent hourglass physique in her brassiere and knickers.

Just as Nadja gathered her courage to plunge into the cold water, Helmut emerged silently from the other side of the pier. The men grinned at Helmut.

"Go, Nadja, go," Karl-Heinz said.

Nadja carefully placed her shoes near her clothes and started to position her body, arms and legs together, for a perfect dive into the deep when she noticed Helmut's wet

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tracks on the pier. She looked up to see Helmut standing naked behind her dripping water.

“Damn you, Karl-Heinz. You tricked me.”

The men laughed loudly as Nadja slapped Karl-Heinz, grinning mischievously at her.

“But you are so lovely in your knickers, Nadja.”

Fritz handed Helmut a dish towel from the hotel as Nadja put her clothes on. Shivering from the cold, Helmut pulled on his underpants and trousers as Heinrich passed him a flask of schnapps. He took a swig and then put on his shirt and jacket.

To make amends, Karl-Heinz tried to cradle Nadja in his arms, but still fuming from the incident, she pushed him away. Nearby, their colleagues were clowning around on the pier, drinking and singing lusty renditions of German drinking songs.

“Fritz, why don’t you go for a swim?” Karl-Heinz asked.

“The only water I like is in my bath, not too cold and not too warm,” Fritz said with a laugh.

Karl-Heinz was pouring a drink for Nadja and Helmut when there was a sudden squeal of brakes and they looked up in time to see a car slide to a stop on the grass near the DKW. A man jumped out of the passenger seat and took a picture, the flash bulb momentarily blinding them.

“Those damn journalists again,” Fritz shouted. “Let’s get their camera and teach them a lesson.”

Heinrich, Helmut and Fritz stumbled towards the DKW, but the man with the camera was already getting back into the car. Heinrich pulled out his Luger pistol and took aim.

“*Nicht schießen!*” Karl-Heinz ordered Heinrich not to shoot and ran towards the car. “They are journalists, we can catch them.”

Anders accelerated away as Karl-Heinz reached the DKW

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and started the engine, waiting impatiently for Nadja and the others to arrive. He then backed up in a hurry and changed gears, flooring the gas pedal as the DKW shot out of the park onto the road in hot pursuit.

"Faster, Karl-Heinz," Fritz yelled.

"Maybe if I shoot at them, they'll stop," Heinrich said.

"I don't want my husband seeing a picture of me in the newspaper, Karl-Heinz," Nadja said with concern. "Offer them money for the film."

"Don't worry, Nadja, we'll get it," Karl-Heinz said.

"If your husband sees the picture, Nadja," Helmut said, "then it will be bye-bye Sweden, hello Russian front for all of us."

"Shoot the tyre," Fritz yelled. "Go on, Heinrich. Let's have some fun."

Heinrich leaned out the window as the cars headed into a curve overlooking a Stockholm canal. He fired twice and one of the tyres exploded.

In the journalist's car Anders heard the shots and the car jerked to the left and then to the right.

"Damn, those Nazi bastards are shooting at us. I think they punctured a tyre," Anders said.

Anders lost control in the curve and ran off the road into the canal with a huge splash. The car filled quickly with water and started to sink. Anders and Stefan struggled to climb clear of the car through the open windows. They paddled toward the shore. On the road they could see Karl-Heinz and his friends in the convertible slow down to watch them swimming to shore.

It had been an interesting evening, Peter Faye thought as they pulled up beside the canal in the British Legation car. In

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a dark suit and grey fedora, Faye got out of the car and looked down at the canal. The driver, a squat fireplug of a man with a receding hairline, laughed at the men in the water.

"Gawd blimey," Bernie Dixon said, "these blokes just love a dip in the bleedin' canal."

Faye watched the Swedish journalists coming ashore. They had been parked across the street from the hotel and had seen the Germans driving away with the journalists in hot pursuit. They'd been following them ever since.

Faye jumped down onto the rocks. There was a jauntiness about his movements as he scrambled towards the two journalists. The photographer held a camera to his chest, dripping water and looking disgruntled.

"Everybody all right?" Peter asked.

"Yes, we are fine. Thank you," Anders said, shaking the water from his hat.

"I saw you go off the road. I thought you might need some help."

"You are British, I think?"

"Yes, I am."

"Can you give us a lift back to town?"

"Of course."

Bernie arrived from the car with two woolen blankets and handed them to the wet journalists who quickly wrapped themselves in them.

On the way Peter offered the two men cigarettes as they sat shivering in the back of the car.

"We are journalists. I am Anders, this is Stefan. You are with the British Legation?"

"Yes. What happened back there?" Peter asked.

"Our fault, I'm afraid. We got into a race with a German DKW and lost."

"Which paper do you work for?" Peter asked.

“Stockholms-Tidningen.”

“You are working very late.”

“A special assignment. And you?” Anders asked as he looked at Peter with a curious expression.

“Coming home from a party.”

“That’s funny.”

“What is funny?”

“I saw someone just like you about an hour ago at the Grand Hotel.”

“Must have been someone else, I’m afraid.”

“It’s possible,” Anders said with a smile.

The car pulled up near the Grand Hotel and the two Swedes got out.

“Well, thank you for the lift.”

“Pleasure to be of some help. Good night.”

“Good night.”

As Peter’s car pulled away, Stefan turned to Anders.

“Damn, what are we going to do now?” Stefan asked, looking totally discouraged. “The camera is soaked. I am sure the pictures are spoiled.”

Anders took out his cigarettes and was about to light up when he noticed they were damp from the canal. He put them back in his pocket as he thought about the presence of a British diplomat arriving so suddenly on the scene of the accident.

“It is not a complete loss, Stefan. I may have another story.”