

# THE PRICE FOR GLORY

A Novel



M. N. SNITZ

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# WITH GRATITUDE



To Stephanie, a special friend, always a bright light and a warm smile.

To editors par excellence Danielle Harvey and Mir – Yashar Seyedbagheri, two guardian angels offered to me by the mysticism of destiny, without whom time and place between the lines would have no meaning.

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To Jim, a confirmed computer geek, and Dale, a computer wise-guy beyond his years and long-time friend, both of whom offered patience and an unrelenting sense of humor as I attempted to survive a slow learning curve, I offer my utmost gratitude.

—Author

# DEDICATED WITH LOVING REVERENCE



Always in my thoughts, this work is gratefully dedicated to my parents. First-generation immigrants from Russia and Germany, who enjoyed America's freedom with dignity, gratitude, and vociferous happiness. I deeply regret they did not have the opportunity to share my journalistic dream.

Mom 1912-2001

Dad 1908-2004

# DEDICATED WITH HONOR



To all those boys from all those wars who have marched lockstep to the sound of guns, victims of nefarious politicians, dictators, and kings without moral conscience who commanded them to march to their doom.

To all those who will suffer and sacrifice themselves in such future endeavors, some for conquest, some for freedom.

To all those defenseless civilian victims who suffer in silence, weak and helpless, the human consequence of the vile nature of war.

To all who rest in graves properly inscribed and accounted for, and the far greater number who dwell in anonymity that reach beyond every horizon, this book is dedicated.

# PREFACE

## GLORY AND DESTINY



GLORY and DESTINY are inescapable soulmates; co-conspirators coupled in Siamese fashion with explicit rules of probability. Both are relentless, untamed forces that engage the characters and confuse their senses of reality and fantasy. Some are offered redemption, others, inexplicable pain. All are caught in a spinning vortex of uncertainty from which there is no escape.

The characters you will meet are superlative, loving, courageous, inspirational, and valorous. They are also deceptive, convivial, diverse, calculating, conniving, elusive and horrific. They share two illusions: GLORY, that offers a natural proclivity to inspire and fulfill a vision for success. And DESTINY, a purveyor of the unknown, the dominant architect of the past and an imprecise prognosticator of the future.

Both are phenomena of inconspicuous intellect and reason. Mystical implements of life's hard labor—too heavy to lift, too difficult to understand.

GLORY is the precedent and DESTINY, the antecedent. Both are creators of tumultuous waves generated by human foibles in an attempt to swim across the stream without drowning.

—Author

*“You were given the choice between war and dishonor. You chose dishonor and you will still have war. If you will not fight for honor when you can easily win, when victory will be sure and not too costly, you may have to fight when all the odds are against you. You may have to fight with no hope of victory. When it is better to perish as patriots than to live as slaves.”*

— Winston Churchill, 1938

*“War is an ugly thing; but not the ugliest of things. The decayed state of moral and patriotic feeling, which thinks that nothing is worth war, is far worse. The person who has nothing for which he is willing to fight, even his own personal safety, is a miserable creature, and has no chance of being free unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself.”*

— John Stuart Mill

#### *Of America:*

*“They owe nothing to any man; they expect nothing from any man; they acquire the habit of always considering themselves as standing alone and they are apt to imagine that their whole destiny is in their own hands.”*

— Alexis de Tocqueville, 1840

*“I don’t want to have lived for nothing like most people. I want to be useful and give pleasure to the people around me that don’t yet know me. I want to go on living even after my death.”*

— Anne Frank 1944

*“I feel no guilt for what I did in the war.  
But I survived when many did not  
Such are the scars of remorse that remain in my heart;  
sordid, putrid and occasionally scalding.  
Testament of the angst forever in my soul.”*

—Author



# EVOLUTION OF A JOURNEY



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# I. GENESIS



“The Unimaginable”

*“War is the continuation of politics by other means.”*

— Carl von Clausewitz

# ONE



In the first century, Rome began to extend her empire beyond Gaul into the unexplored northern provinces of pristine natural resources known as the Black Forest. These regions were inhabited by natives of violent, disjointed tribes collectively referred to in Rome as “barbarians”.

During an isolated skirmish, a young, courageous Germanic warrior named Arminius was captured and returned to Rome as a slave. Members of the Roman senate instinctively found him to be of superior intelligence and manner. Gaius Octavius Aurelius, a veteran senator of high rank, adopted the young man as his own.

The protege voraciously studied the classics as he planned his freedom. He became a serious scholar of Alexander the Great, Socrates, Homer, Aristotle, Hannibal, and Julius Caesar. At the first opportunity, he escaped and returned to his cherished Black Forest. His transformation acute, he became an honored charismatic prince of his Cherusci tribe. In time he was chosen a Teutonic knight and war leader of all tribes united against Rome.

Alerted by spies in Rome of an impending invasion of the Black Forest, Arminius planned to attack the Roman legions with Teutonic flair. What followed in 9 AD was one of the most important and singularly overlooked events in human history; a monumental premise the result of which foretold the future of a continent and its people for the next 2,000 years.

\* \* \*

The stillness of an early frigid wintry morning seemed to cast an eerie spell over the dense wilderness of the Black Forest. A morbid sense of surrealism hovered in silence. There was a distinctive absence of birds in flight and small animals scampering about in the daily drama of eat-or-be-eaten. The dearth of such activity conveyed unexplained premonitions. Absent too was the energy of an early morning sun, rebuked by a tardy midnight. Pre-dawn ice and snow, heavy and opaque, clung thickly to the trees. Branches, engaged in their own war of survival, bent forward, their heavily iced limbs posed as various exotic figures in graphic demise, their barren images dark, moody and foreboding. It was a portent of impending doom.

Hidden in the Black Forest, Germanic warriors waited patiently for the Romans, known to be less than a day's march away. The warriors' last meal two days earlier, coupled with the bone-chilling cold, had left them weak and miserable. Their teeth chattered and gnashed almost in unison. Their bodies sought an elusive warmth, huddled and gyrating under heavy animal hides.

"As the Romans approach from the south, surely they will hear us in our misery," some offered with lurid smiles. Many stuffed rags into their throats to abort incessant noise and hunger. Those who slept did so fitfully. Others shrugged. All accepted their fate.

After an arduous eight-week march from Rome, three legions emerged briefly on the southern edge of the forest, energized by the earliest moments of an early sun's brightness. They offered the barbarians a highly trained, well-fed, and all-too-eager killing machine. The deliberate clanking of their shiny armor conveyed a momentous and chilling arrival to all who dared oppose them. In a brief moment of delusion, a golden rainbow appeared and reflected off their armor in a bright array of colors.

"A positive sign from Roman gods for victory," soldiers shouted as officers nodded in concert.

Meanwhile, exhausted Germanic barbarians remained in the darkness and security of the inner forest. No superstitious images

or apparitions appeared for them. Their resolve stiffened. They persevered. And they waited.

As the Romans entered the heavily wooded forest, Arminius allowed his enemy temporary freedom of movement. Large bundles of previously collected branches tied to dead, dry foliage concealed the natives. They anxiously awaited the signal. When Arminius was satisfied of his position, he nodded as massive bundles were set ablaze. Within seconds an inferno unfurled from the hills into the valley and into the Roman formations.

The Roman soldiers, shocked by the intensity of the heat, recoiled as fireballs of devastation struck them from every direction. The Romans' first line was immediately incinerated, metamorphosed into white lava. Armor became a molten tomb as agony reverberated and echoed throughout the forest. The barbarians charged into their enemy, screaming in a cacophony of abject terror. Their eyes bulged with anticipation; their long, filthy hair and beards billowed wildly in the morning breeze. An amalgam of death, violent and fearful, followed. Unleashed barbarity struck the Romans in a maelstrom of savagery. Swords and spears hacked Roman limbs and plunged deeply into the hearts of the invaders. The barbarians engulfed their enemy. The Romans quickly crumbled in deadly close-quarter combat.

Torrential rains began as the invaders attempted a breakout from the ambush. Archers became ineffective, their bows and arrows waterlogged as was their heavy and cumbersome armor.

Initial survivors of the three legions sought escape in the darkness of a night march but were again trapped in the unfamiliar forest. As the morning sun rose over the battlefield, they occupied only one hundred meters of dry land, a dense swamp on both flanks. The barbarians decimated the three Roman Legions almost to a man. Assistant Roman commander Legatus Numonius Vala fled but was caught and executed. Plubius Quintillus Varius, the Roman commander committed suicide. In a common Teutonic ritual, the bodies of all Roman officers were cooked in pots,

their flesh fed to the victorious warriors, their bones scattered. It was a victorious feast most welcomed by the starving tribesmen in celebration.

Upon hearing of the defeat from a survivor, Roman Emperor Augustus became so distraught he butted his head against a stone wall in his palace until bloodied and wailed, “*Quintili vare legiones redde!*” *Give me back my legions!*

The barbarian victory was the impetus for complete unison. Vastly unorganized tribes eventually formed a sovereign Germanic nation. Rome’s subsequent invasions were repulsed. The engagement, known as the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest, changed the history of a continent and the destiny of mankind.

\* \* \*

In an early glimmer of a nascent twentieth century morning in that same Black Forest, a couple’s only son was born. The dampness of the hour initially offered only a stifled yawn and a slight shiver from him amid smiles from the plenary of family who gathered in the cottage.

Soft billows of voluminous white clouds glided across the sky. The largest of the clouds slowly separated and floated directly toward the local village as the remainder of nature’s formation aimlessly drifted away. The cloud did not initially appear menacing as it approached the numerous dwellings. But suddenly it stopped, hovered a moment, then engulfed one of the houses in a darkened shroud. The early morning calm was shattered by an unnatural disturbance of nearly seismic proportion.

Heaven unexpectedly opened its portals. Strident mysticism spewed from its gates in a deafening cacophony of a thousand cannons. Large, winged banshees seemingly hovered everywhere, screeching with a deafening invocation as their dark images feigned a vindictive attack. Everyone in the small cottage screamed in terror.

“What is happening? Is God punishing us?”

Collectively, the family covered their heads to shield themselves from a descent into an unknown abyss, their faces wrinkled signposts of pending doom. In tandem, brilliant light split through the foreboding darkness and filled the cottage with other supernatural images of ferocious carnivores. The family felt their souls scorched with unresolved damnation. They seemed teetered on the edge, about to plunge into the unexpected chasm of the devil's playground.

As quickly as it appeared, the light crawled away, hissing and howling into an unknown dimension. Elicited cries of terror remained, mostly strident, but muffled with religious chants and prayers for absolution. Even as abusive noise and light abated, families continued to tremble. Ghastly images remained on bare cement walls. Darkened silhouettes of Gothic shadows appeared, then escaped for future generations to proclaim or disavow what had transpired.

In a moment of relative calm, a single star appeared without distinctive shape or form. A beam of light drifted effortlessly through a window, then cast its glow on the newborn child. Sounds of women weeping, grateful for their survival, filled the room. The family slowly recovered. All eyes focused on the baby. He seemed different somehow as cosmic brilliance bathed him in innocent slumber.

With profound gratitude, the father garnered his courage and seized the moment.

“This is my son! My only son! He is a gift from the unknown, another dimension. He is a child prodigy of Arminius, the Germanic prince of our fathers. My son is of nascent fairy tales and dreams of wonder. He will have the strength of Thor, the cunning of Zeus, and the intellect of Aristotle. He will be chiseled as Michelangelo's *David*. I name him Abraham, the biblical patriarch of the ancient Hebrews!”

In response, Abraham's eyes fluttered, then closed. A faint smile seemed to unfurl from his lips as the legacy of Arminius, the Teutonic knight returned to nocturnal bliss.



As a young boy, Abraham became enthralled with the legend of Arminius the Teuton. He devoured every word written about the prince and inculcated his personal image of this mythical warrior into his own psyche. His parents included their own stratagem early and often.

“Seek resolutions to problems regardless of difficulty. Every problem has a solution,” they told him. “Personal success is not achieved without one. Either solve problems and win quickly or dig deeper to find the answer that unlocks your dilemma.”

Abraham Steinnermann assiduously pursued life’s victories, learned from Germanic lore, as a means of acquiring personal status. His ego flourished. Handsome and charismatic, he could be charming with a beautiful, warm smile or metamorphose quickly into an irascible ogre. Women teased him about his long, lush eyelashes, which they secretly coveted but could never possess. His large brown eyes were mesmerizing. His hair changed color with the seasons and rested in waves of curls that fell casually about his head, mussed by his constant fussing. Tranquil waters or large reflective sunlit windows were his imagined mirrors, often his only companions. He was an elitist of the highest order. No one overlooked him. He intimidated more people than he endeared. Most escaped at first opportunity. Those who did not regretted it.

*If my adversary is a friend, I will gain control and win without regret. If an enemy, I will crush him without remorse. Like Arminius, I will be resolute and confident of victory. It is the only way to win. Throughout my life, I will store such visions deeply within me. I am blessed to have everything required to be a legend. To be the handsome mythical knight in shining armor with the intellect of a world’s scholar and the innate desire to excel without regard for the fate of others. I will engage relentlessly in the hunt. I will not be denied anything. It is my Destiny!*

As he grew to maturity, he used holidays from school to work

on neighboring farms, felling trees and pushing plows. He became an Adonis, six feet three inches tall and over two hundred pounds. Physical prowess was his dearest companion. His eagerness to engage others occasionally led him astray. He assaulted a policeman and was sentenced to six months of hard labor but was pardoned after thirty days. His father's eyes flushed with painful tears as he berated his son with a healthy taste of discipline that Abraham never forgot.

An influential gentile leader of the village and friend of Abraham's father offered the young man an opportunity to apply to Heidelberg University, a monument of European prestige and a bulwark of anti-Semitism since the fourteenth century. He was not expected to qualify. *My enemies expect me to fail. They don't know me very well. I will absorb the poison of others with the inner strength and valor of Arminius!* Abraham graduated with quiet zeal in three years, magna cum laude with a bachelor's degree in economics. Ever assiduous in the pursuit of his studies, a master's degree followed a year later.

Abraham Steinnermann was hired by an exclusive German bank to learn the finer points of European finance. He filled the bottom rung of a very high ladder. It was a most exhilarating time for him and for Germany. Adolf Hitler had resoundingly resurrected Germany from the tomb of the world depression and the specter of her loss in the First World War. The dictator seemed to perform miracles and Herr Steinnermann joined citizens proud to offer his personal contribution. As a Jew however, he initially failed to understand its immediate consequence.

Abraham nurtured an astute awareness of successful people. He loved their exuberance for life. In particular, he devoured American and French magazines and was especially enthralled with Hollywood celebrities. He dressed in the latest sartorial styles, donning the most expensive fabrics. On a young banker's salary, acceptance of such dreams and other financial responsibilities often became a sticky affair.

Of particular note was his almost fiendish obsession for beautiful women. The lovelier they were, the more intense his affairs. Always brief, always passionate, occasionally sordid, usually disrespectful and shallow. His list of paramours grew exponentially as birthdays passed – far too many broken hearts followed, and fragile humanity was squandered far too often in frivolous liaisons. As an unrecognized libertine, he abrogated his Germanic legacy and discarded his birthright in debauchery. His mother, whom Abraham cherished and loved deeply, tried but failed to keep her son on the righteous path.

Abraham continued to utilize profound energy to hunt female lovers. Interestingly, he came upon a book that featured the life of seventeenth century English nobleman and Earl of Rochester John Wilmot who devoted a small sum of his life to writing poetry and a short-lived future doused in wine and the depravity of European women. Quality was unimportant. The Earl was just as pleased to bed a lower-class laundress as a princess who awaited her crown or a bored queen who awaited her lover. Abraham's talent rivaled those of the English Earl. Even Wilmot's early death from alcoholism and sexual disease went unheeded.

\* \* \*

The brutal years of 1941-1943 had been long and arduous for some, deadly for others. Hitler's war, into its fourth year, stripped innocent victims naked. The planet continued to plummet into darkness. The long Russian winter campaign made the carnage particularly costly for both sides. Under a bleak and ominous sky, marauding dark and murky shadows emerged as the peril of shot and shell cascaded upon the European continent. It was a man-made solar eclipse, unprecedented in the history of military calamity. Two powerful armies, hungry and carnivorous, wrestled in the jaws of pure insanity that nearly consumed them whole.

A desperate planet needed to cry. The weight of humanity's

ashes, lost and forgotten, burdened gray and motionless clouds that hovered over the continent. Neither fresh snow nor torrential rain was sufficient to disinfect the stench of war that belched victims upon the land left to rot where they fell. Flowers failed to bloom. Burned fields of grain lay dormant. Europe continued to smother itself in human depravity without remorse. Without conscience. Without hope.

Many Germans no longer attended parades. Food was scarce. Winter stoves were without coal. Citizens burned their furniture. Only those with the greatest faith believed spring would proffer a renewal. Mother Earth tried with boundless energy to influence a rebirth, a natural phenomenon of annual joy that seemed to have taken a leave of absence during an eternal chasm of a self-imposed endless midnight.

\* \* \*

Abraham Steinnermann slept peacefully. If the sun struggled, it was of no immediate concern. Spring's philosophical and humanistic importance failed to break through the man's impenetrable ego. He simply did not honor nature's gift of an early morning sunrise. All that mattered was to awaken with his newest lover and the joy of his profession, equally gratifying of his spiritually lascivious nature.

Steinnermann continued to impress the European banking community with low inflation and brilliantly creative national loans in a world of financial depression and war. His extremely complex projects helped rejuvenate Germany's national and military resurgence, an irony lost on both the German Chancellor and Jewish financier.

His present tryst with the lovely young wife of his bank's senior vice president astounded him. He actually cared for her. The young man was taken aback by this wellspring of sincerity. Both were smitten immediately at a bank Christmas party. They flirted, drank too much, and took certain liberties. Within a month, knowledge

of the affair had become all too common. She even traveled with Herr Steinnermann on the bank's Reichsmark. The liaison ostensibly ended twice, but resumed both times, usually within a week, their mutual lust insatiable. The older cuckold was unable to control either his wife or her paramour.

Disgraced, the middle-aged husband tendered his position with the bank after twenty-five years of faithful service, his very lovely wife after ten years of mostly unfaithful service, but not the last two years of fervent reverence for Russian vodka. Earlier this same morning, his drunken body, partly submerged in an early tide, was caught by his suit jacket on a small bridge pillar along the Rhine River and unceremoniously washed out to sea.

Steinnermann slept soundly. His breathing was strong. The enjoyment of his recent financial achievements inflated his ego. He smiled and longed wryly for another chiseled moment during an early morning dream and reached instinctively for his paramour. She always left an hour before sunrise to return to her husband to make his breakfast. This morning she returned to an empty house as Abraham's arousal heightened then ebbed, immersed in a dream of his lover. Unsatisfied, he returned to blissful sleep.

Occasionally a moment, an abundance of overconfidence consumed him, a seemingly single Jew who continued to dodge the long arm of conflict. Since he had swindled the odds in war-torn Germany for almost five years, he was convinced his survival co-existed with his prominence and professional importance. *Never mind*, he rationalized. *My heritage is superb, and I am indispensable. My supreme ego and spiritual legacy, replete with my mystical shield and armor of Arminius, protect me.*

The rising morning sun almost pierced his partially closed bedroom curtains. A tiny refraction of sunlight darted and dodged with free will, as it sought an opportunity to break its bondage. Eventually, a single shard of light fell innocuously through the opening between curtains and glided softly across his bedroom floor. Another moment passed. The sun intensified in early morn-

ing brilliance. He shielded his face with the back of his hand and repelled this daunting alien, an interloper of stealth and cunning in search of a path into the man's conscience. Conscience? He had no conscience! *I remain guilt free and sublimely happy!*

He required a brief moment longer to reflect on the previous evening of celebration. It was a culmination of his promotion as the youngest industrial loan officer in Western Europe and his delightfully coincidental birthday. *Moments most precious and significant*, he thought. His stomach continued to swirl with the evening's remnants of caviar, lobster, and goose pate. Champagne still made his head throb, as did the particularly passionate eroticism of his lover, Frau von Brattenburg, whose wonderful birthday gift singed his soul.

Rays of sunshine dared to penetrate his solitude but finally stroked his last nocturnal moment. *No time to waste playing such games. New challenges await me on my first day as a newly appointed bank officer. I expect new tributaries of opportunity to trickle into a steady stream, then a torrent of adulation will wash over me. Time is not something to waste this day or any day. Such are the tools of a fool!*

Finally, with a loud "whoop," he flung the bed sheet and blanket aside and leaped onto an unforgiving slippery throw rug. *A risky demonstration, my young friend, of an untalented gymnast's exit off the high beam. Ah, yes. What an ending to a perfect week to break a leg!*

His obstinacy resolved, he threw open almost violently both ends of the curtains in resignation, announcing to the world, "Steinnermann is ready for another day!"

The full morning sun collected itself, almost giddy with final success as colors nearly hallucinated where they splashed about the room with impunity and reckless abandon. Steinnermann showered, shaved, and dressed elegantly. *A most befitting portrayal for a young man of my new status.* His glance in the mirror reflected a spectacular, glowing image. However, being a Jew during this perilous time nagged at him again, a recurring brief buzz in his brain that traveled slowly along his spine. *I am convinced of*

*my survival. My professional importance continues. My armor, my talisman ensures success. Yet that incessant buzz; that damn feeling I cannot overcome!*

Abraham basked in the glow that flooded his room a moment longer. Again, he peered intently at his image in the mirror. He adjusted the knot of his tie and carefully leveled his expensive gold tie clasp, his initials clearly visible. It was a gift from a forgotten par amour. Casually, he fluffed his pocket square until it sat perfectly in the breast pocket of his suit jacket. He touched his gold cuff links, also monogrammed. Another gift from a former lover. He combed his hair for the last time.

He was fixated as he stared at himself, clearly mesmerized by the mirror's projection. *Yes, I am without a doubt a magnificent example of manhood!* His thoughts echoed a quiet chuckle as he realized the silliness of his narcissism. However, that didn't prevent one last look. *Yes! I ride a shooting star, a master example of my German-Jewish heritage and the legacy of Arminius!*

With a hunk of bread and a slice of cheese, he was out the door. He quickly ran the two blocks to catch the streetcar that delivered him to the bank. Ten minutes later, he jumped off the moving transit, this time with acceptable gymnastic form, and entered the bank. He moved with confidence to his new desk reserved for bank officers, his name hand carved on a marble stand for all to see.

So it was on this spring morning that Abraham A. Steinnermann, the new Assistant Vice President of European Loans, Stuttgart Division, emphasized his declaration of another perfect day for himself. He smiled slightly, ownership of a private glow courtesy of his departed lover.

However, particularly on this first day of spring Herr Steinnermann's talisman offers changes without consideration: failure looms to protect him from the hell soon to engulf him. Much too soon the first surreal metamorphosis in life will raise its ugly head. His strong, tightly woven talisman will morph into a giant predator, no longer able to offer sanctuary. It will grow restless and tight-

en its grip as it slithers its mass around him. Abraham will begin to feel pressure. Anxiety will turn quickly into FEAR! The young man who seeks only joy and personal fulfillment to placate his ego will begin to feel a tight and dysfunctional constriction in his lungs. He will gasp for air as his light begins to fade and darkness descends upon him. Too soon, Herr Steinnermann will lose everything he values most. Too soon, he will encounter a much different Destiny than the one he envisions; the one he holds so dear.

His body trembles slightly. *That feeling again! A tingle that moves through my skull at lightning speed. A warning? Is my time up? Am I trapped? Where is my talisman? Oh my God! Is my savior now witness to my demise?*

Destiny stops at his door to discuss options but there are none. His nightmare begins, chased by ravenous predators with his first step down a path that excoriates his religion and his soul. Strident screams of pain and terror will open horrific emotional wounds to be covered by behemoth scars; they will linger for a lifetime. There will be ghastly visions, shocking and inconceivable. Memories will fester and putrefy in his gut, like a slab of rotten meat. Initially, his brain will refuse to respond. His soul will slowly stumble, and his mind will begin to crumble and slide toward insanity. The edges of his past, a discolored blurred photo, will be identified only by frayed edges. His present will abuse him and bid adieu, postmarked “no forward address.” His future will require a special introduction earmarked “unknown.”

Soon, moments of past gaiety and torrid love affairs, sweet dreams and unfulfilled hedonism will be collected and sorted into a file never to be reopened. He will long for the wonder of beautiful sunrises previously ignored or trivialized. In his angst, this young man will confront lost moments. He will lament, *if only I could have experienced the aroma of a bouquet of fresh flowers, the songs of birds embracing a new day. How glorious that would have been!*

Destiny has plans for Herr Abraham A. Steinnermann; God will not interfere.



*“Death, death, death. Death at night. Death in the morning.  
Death in the afternoon. We lived with death.  
How should a human feel?”*

— Pavel Stenkin, Russian Prisoner, 1942

*“First they came for the socialists and I did not speak out  
since I was not a socialist.  
Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out  
since I was not a trade unionist.  
Then they came for the Jews and I did not speak out  
because I was not a Jew.  
Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak out  
for me.”*

— Pastor Martin Niemöller

## TWO



Throughout most of that fateful morning in 1943, Abraham Steinnermann remained at his desk, confounded by an unforeseen problem as the young vice president wrestled with the war’s transfer of inflated national French currency to his country’s robust secret treasury in Switzerland. Two very rough looking men in long leather coats walked into the bank and asked the receptionist only one question. With fear in her eyes, she pointed. The men followed her direction.

The banker did not look up as the Gestapo officers stood at his desk. Not a word was uttered. Words were unnecessary.

“What is your name?” The officer’s voice was gruff, his manner uncouth. Both menacing men mirrored an identical reflection. The banker finally looked up, disgusted by the absence of civility. His heart almost pounded out of his chest.