

## EXCERPT

**THIS IS A CONDENSATION OF THE VERY CREEPY PROLOGUE OF SLINGSHOT, A WORK IN PROGRESS. THE THEME - BEING THE NEED, IMPOSSIBILITY, AND FUTILITY OF REVENGE. THE CHARACTER-DRIVEN STORY UTILIZES TIME TRAVEL AND HUMOR (ONE OF WHICH YOU WILL SEE IN THIS CREEPY PASSAGE).**

# SLINGSHOT

## PROLOGUE - APRIL, 1945

The door closed with a familiar squeak. The workmanship was solid, but the elements, seeping through from above, and the preoccupation with the daily events, made petty maintenance a low priority. The squeak was comforting, familiar. And for the first time, he was afforded a moment to reflect on the sound. The unrelenting grey of the walls, ceiling and floor contrasted with the plush wood of the door.

His breathing was shallow, quick. His throat was dry and stale. The room smelled of perspiration and fear. For a moment, he became dizzy and was forced to steady himself on the mahogany bookcase to the right of the door. "Don't pass out now. That would be disaster," he said softly, broken by phlegm that caused him to cough.

The desk was four feet from where he now stood. Each footstep was measured, unsteady, shaky, but deliberate.

He saw the lifeless body of Eva Braun, slumped over the chair and he heard the distinct sound of a large droplet of blood hitting the ground. She was somewhere else now and his concern was not on her, but on his last few seconds of life.

Reaching the desk, he held his revolver in his left hand. He was weak, frail from the excesses, the stress, the recent malnutrition, his Parkinson's, and his depression. The revolver was heavy and it was difficult to hold it steady. He checked the ammunition to be sure there would be no misfiring. His shaky hand touched the sweat on his cheek as it slid downward to his deeply chapped lips. The salty excretion burned his lips.

Again, he felt dizzy and nauseated. *He fell on his knees.* He lay on his left side on the floor, partly on his red, tan, and black oriental rug and partly on the cold, grey floor, and vomited. He tried to steady himself, but his hand landed in the vomit and it slid from under him. His chin hit the floor.

Gathering what strength he had, he slowly sat up. Blinking twice, trying to clear his mind, he used Eva's over-stuffed chair to help him to his feet, so that he could regain control of the revolver.

The revolver was not on the desk. It was by his feet. He uttered, "*sheis*," and bent to pick up the gun. Again the room collapsed about him like a carousel of bubbles.

The moment was here. His hand shook. With his other hand he steadied it as best he could. Pointing the gun at his head, he summoned all of his remaining energy and pulled the trigger.

There was no sound, not for him, anyway. His eyes opened wide and his left eye immediately shut tight. His head jerked back and hit the desk with a sound that he did not hear. Blood splattered onto the desk, onto the Oriental rug, mixing with his vomit. Images of his life as a student and his triumphs at Nuremburg stuck like a motion picture on pause. No more adoring crowds, no more generals looking to him for advice. No more.

He lay dead.

Time passed. The officers in the hallway had heard the shots knew what they had to do, but they wanted to be sure that they would not interrupt anything by entering prematurely.

As the officers approached the door, there was a strange, unidentifiable sound, and a light shone brightly through the oversized keyhole of the oak door, projecting a tight stream of light, carried by the dust in the air.

Bluger was the first to enter. The door handle was warm to the touch, contrasting with the cold, clamminess of the surroundings. An odor of ozone was in the air, a strange sound.

He slowly opened the door. This time the squeak sounded deafening, more like a screech. Bluger felt a sudden dizziness, a strange double-vision, as if events were being played backwards and forwards at the same time. Recovering his perspective somewhat, he was immediately hit by the stench of vomit, the metallic smell of blood, and a vague odor of bitter almond. For a second he could not breathe. Not because of the smell, but because of what he saw. He could not conceptualize his Fuhrer dead, not even now, with the Fuhrer laying lifeless before him. He looked back to the hallway. "It is done," he said, *whispering*, as if not to arouse the anger of ghosts.

The others entered and experienced exactly what Bluger felt. All except for Muhler. A large man still in command of his field discipline, Muhler knew what to expect, if only in the abstract. He knew what to do and how to do it. He had a job to do and he was calm, collected, and proud of his part in the drama. This would be done right, and seeing the condition of the others, he knew he would have to take charge.

"Bluger, you carry Frau Braun. I will take him. Hurry. You can hear the bombs falling," Muler said with a clipped staccato.

Bluger replied, "The bombs are our friends."

Muhler understood what Bluger meant, but he had no time to waste by worrying about inevitabilities and the Russians.

"Just do it!" Muhler barked the order as if the fury of the Fuhrer had invaded his personality.

They picked up the bodies and carried them to the door, Muhler first, with Hitler, followed by Bluger carrying Eva Braun. Approaching the stairs, Muhler took the lead and opened the heavy steel door. He threw the main bolt and the door opened with a characteristic clang of metal against metal.

They carried the bodies up the stairs. Bluger counted as he ascended one-by-one. Thirteen, then a landing, a ninety-degree turn, another thirteen stairs.

Klammel was the last to leave, putting out the light and reverently closing the door carefully, so as not to slam it shut. He turned back for a second and saw a daily journal on Hitler's desk. "Leave no evidence." The orders ringing in his ears, he turned the light back on and reached for the journal.

Again the strange sound, the bright light. Klammel put his arm over his eyes to shield the painful brilliance, and he was again hit by the dizziness and the double-vision, even though his arm was still over his eyes. The odor of ozone, this time, a bit stronger than the first time. And the journal that had been sitting on the Fuhrer's desk was gone.

And so it was observed by the first observation expedition. Followed by the second retrieval experiment. The third visit would come soon. This would change everything.