

THE CHANCELLOR
By Raymond White

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The Chancellor remained sitting at the small, black table. “No,” he yelled, then screamed, “NO! It cannot be!” He pounded his clenched fists down so hard that the table gave way and crashed to the floor.

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The Chancellor watched the devil step out of the room and close the door behind him. He heard the door click shut, and the key turn, and deadbolt lock firm. The devil’s receding laughter angered the chancellor even more..

The Chancellor stood and picked up his chair and smashed it down on the already broken table. The chair came apart. What was left of it, he smashed against the wall over and over until there was nothing left of it but shattered pieces.

Then he picked up the other chair and smashed *it* to smithereens as well.

Then he picked up the table top and smashed it also against the wall until it likewise was a pile of splintered wood.

There was nothing else in the room for him to smash so he smashed his head onto the unyielding white wall. Over and over he smashed his head until the wall streaked with his blood. Finally he crumbled exhausted to the floor and fell unconscious.

He dreamed, and fretted as he dreamed.

Then he woke. He was in a small square room of four white walls. He sat up on the floor and leaned back against a wall. *Where am I?* he wondered. He had no idea how he came to this place.

In the middle of the floor there was a small black table with two black chairs. He stood and walked to the table and touched it.

On the far wall, he saw a black door. The only thing that broke the monotony of the stark white walls, other than the black furniture, was that stark, black door.

He walked to it. He grabbed the knob and turned it. The knob turned well enough, but the door was locked. After a few failed attempts to open the door, the chancellor gave up and returned to the table. He sat in one of the chairs and wondered what might happen.

He did not have to wait long. He heard a key poke its way into the door and turn. The lock clicked and the door opened.

An average looking man wearing an average looking suit entered the room. He carried a briefcase. He closed the door behind him, sat in the available chair, placed his briefcase on the table and opened it.

“Good morning, Adolf. How are you today?”

“Fine enough, I guess. But where am I? And who are you?”

“Me? Oh. I’m the devil, Satan, Lucifer. And I’ll be your interviewer today. I normally delegate lost souls to my demon legions, but you are a special treat so I keep you to myself.”

“The Devil? Then why am I not in hell?”

“Oh, you are in hell. This room is your own private hell. You will never leave it.” Adolf glanced around. “Well,” he said, “This is not *so* bad. At least there is no fire.”

“You want fire?” the Devil asked. “I can arrange fire for you — if you prefer.”

“Oh no. Of course not. I was just wondering...”

“Fire burns souls down to their core being, so they can be reassembled into something more useful, more redeemable. But I like you just as you are. Why change perfection?”

“So, what happens now?”

“As I said, I interview you.” The Devil pulled a single file folder out of his briefcase, set it on the table and opened it. He picked up the top sheet and handed it to Adolf.

Adolf perused it carefully. “This is my life story?” he asked.

“Well, it’s a synopsis.” Satan grabbed the sheet from Adolf’s hands and returned it to the folder. “Most of your life is uninteresting. You actually accounted for yourself pretty well during the first world war, so that’s not useful. But the last decade of your life, that’s stunning. That’s the fun part, and that’s what we’re going to talk about.”

Satan glanced down at the sheet. “Your name is Adolf Hitler. You were the Chancellor and Dictator of Germany before and through World War II. You died with a self-inflicted bullet wound to the head. Do you remember any of that?”

Adolf said, “I think I do. I dream of such things.”

“You dream because what you did is who you are. You can’t escape who you are. But your sins are not what interest me now.”

“Then what does interest you?”

“You lost the war. That interests me. Do you recall that?”

A scowl scrawled across Adolf’s face. “Yes, I do. We lost because of incompetent generals. Those stupid morons in the field. Cowards, all of them. I should have had them shot and replaced.”

The Devil smiled. “When I say you lost the war, I mean *you* lost the war. I mean you, personally.”

“Oh?” asked Adolf. “How so?”

The Devil pulled another sheet out of the folder and handed it to Adolf. It was a news clipping. It was entitled, “Nazis Invade Ukraine”.

“So? We invaded the Ukraine. So what? It was war.”

“What makes this so fun is you made history, but you don’t understand history. Which gives me the opportunity to explain it to you. The Russians invaded the Ukraine. On Stalin’s orders, the Russians murdered hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians. The Ukrainians hated the Russians. Then your German army arrived and kicked out the Russians. The Ukrainians hailed your soldiers as delivering heroes. Until — ” The Devil paused with a teasing smile.

“Until what?” Adolf demanded.

“You took their food to feed your army, and a million Ukrainians starved to death.”

“But it was war. We delivered them, they needed to be grateful and feed us.”

“I understand. But a million Ukrainians starved, and as a result, they hated Germans even more than they hated Russians.”

Satan shut up and waited for a response.

Adolf thought for a moment then said, “Yeah? So?”

Satan rolled his eyes in disbelief, then said, “The so is, if you hadn’t taken their food, if you had instead given them guns and pointed them east, you would have fielded an entire army of willing and angry Ukrainian soldiers who would have fought *your* war on the eastern front. While the Russians were occupied with the Ukrainians, all those German troops that you wasted at Leningrad and Stalingrad, you could have redeployed in the west and conquered England without a whimper. America would never have entered the war. Then when the west was done, you would have redeployed everything to the east, reinforced your Ukrainian allies — and, I might add, your Finnish allies who you also managed to anger after they first hated the Russians — and you would have run over the Russians within a year. It would have all been over. German victory would have been complete.”

Satan sat back, smiled, and waited for a response.

Hitler nervously fidgeted. “But war is never that simple. It seemed the right thing to do at that time.”

Satan asserted, “World War II was that simple. But wait. There’s more.”

“You have my attention. Continue.”

“Oh I will. You had some brilliant scientists at your disposal. Von Braun and others. You ordered them to produce super weapons, and they did.”

“They did but not soon enough!” complained Adolf. “We lost the war because of their constant delays.”

“Oh no,” countered the devil. “They gave you what you wanted when you needed. But you deployed them wrongly.”

“Oh? How so?”

“Well, for instance you had jet fighters in the field in 1943. The Messerschmitt Me 262. The sky was yours for the taking, but you didn’t take it.”

“That’s because our fighter pilots were cowards!”

“No, they weren’t cowards. They were brave men who fought and died for your cause. But you gave them bad directives.”

“Oh? How so.?”

“You were so angry with the English that you ordered most of your jet fleet to fly bombing raids into England.”

“But I needed to cripple the English war machine.”

“Of course. But by focusing on long range attacks, you left all of Germany vulnerable to the Allied Air Command, and *they* destroyed *your* war machine.”

“No!” Hitler shouted. “That’s not how it happened. I *did* deploy jets to defend German skies.”

“A token amount. Your jets shot down a total of five bombers. A pittance. Your pilots came to you and begged you to let them defend Germany. And what did you tell them? You threatened to shoot them if they didn’t obey their orders. So they went back to their jets, flew their stupid missions, and Germany burned. In Hamburg and Dresden, 90% of the people, *your* people, died in napalm attacks. Men, women, and children died in their air raid shelters as jellied gasoline flowed down after them. That’s on you. You could have stopped it.”

“No, No. My pilots didn’t do their job.”

“They *did* do their job — the job you gave them. But it was the wrong job. Had you deployed your entire jet fleet to defend Germany, you would have stopped the Allied Air Command in its tracks, saved your factories and your people, and extended the war another six months. And by then you would have had ...” The devil paused. He was enjoying the Chancellor’s pain too much to speed through it.

“Had what? *Had what?*” the Chancellor demanded.”

“This is the fun part. You would have had the atom bomb,” answered the devil as he chortled. You could have incinerated Paris and London and Moscow and even Washington D.C. You would have had the missiles to deliver them, but you squandered your own war effort with your own incompetence.”

“It was my generals giving me bad advice. It was them, I tell you, it was them!”

“No. It was you. Your generals gave you good advice. And you responded by replacing them with bad generals who were more compliant to your demands.”

“But if I had just had more soldiers.”

“But you *did* have more soldiers. You just killed them all.”

“What? I did no such thing.”

“Oh yes you did. At Auschwitz, and Dachau, and Treblinka, and all the rest of your concentration camps.”

“We killed Jews there, enemies of Germany.”

“You killed Jews there, loyal citizens of Germany who fought gallantly and died gallantly on the blood fields of World War I. You and Himmler killed six million Jews.. And when they died, so died also a million gallant Jewish soldiers that would have fought for you. Let’s do some math. Let’s see, a million men divided by ten thousand men per division, that makes one hundred divisions. That’s correct. Am I right?” asked the devil.”

Adolf reluctantly nodded in agreement.

The devil continued. “So, a million men would have fielded a hundred divisions of troops. What could you have done with a hundred more divisions? Run over the Americans at the Battle of the Bulge? Delivered reinforcements to Rommel’s African Corp? How many ways could you have won your war if you had had a hundred more divisions? You killed a hundred of your own divisions. My, my. And you wonder why you lost the war. Oh, and by the way, how many SS troops never saw combat because they were too busy shooting and gassing innocent Jews? Humm? You keep talking about cowards in your ranks. *They*, your precious SS, were the real cowards. They wouldn’t face enemy fire if Germany’s survival depended on it. Oh, that’s right. It did.”

“No,” replied the Chancellor as she shook his head in objection. “No, no, no.”

The devil responded with another question. “Did you know that British Special Operations (the SOE) had a viable plan to assassinate you?”

“No, I didn’t know that.”

“It was called Operation Foxley. They could have assassinated you at Berghof in July of 1944. But they didn’t. Would you like to know why?”

“Yes, I suppose.”

“Because many of them believed that if you died, Germany might actually win the war because your successor might actually be competent. The allies needed to keep you in charge of Germany because your incompetence was guaranteeing an allied victory.”

The devil laughed hysterically.

The Chancellor screamed, “NO! None of this can be true!”

The devil stood and stepped to the closed door. He was laughing so hard that his hand slipped off the doorknob. But with a moment's composure, he found the knob again, got a firmer grip, turned it, and opened the door.

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