

IRA LEVIN'S  
THE BOYS FROM BRAZIL  
*(Excerpt)*

# CHAPTER 1

EARLY ONE EVENING in September of 1974 a small twin-engine plane, silver and black, sailed down onto a secondary runway at São Paulo's Congonhas Airport, and slowing, turned aside and taxied to a hangar where a limousine stood waiting. Three men, one in white, transferred from the plane to the limousine, which drove from Congonhas toward the white skyscrapers of central São Paulo. Some twenty minutes later, on the Avenida Ipiranga, the limousine stopped in front of Sakai, a temple-like Japanese restaurant.

The three men came side by side into Sakai's large red-lacquered foyer. Two of them, in dark suits, were bulky and aggressive-looking, one blond and the other black-haired. The third man, striding between them, was slimmer and older, in white from hat to shoes except for a lemon-yellow necktie. He swung a fat tan briefcase in a white-gloved hand and whistled a melody, looking about with apparent pleasure.

A kimonoed checkroom girl dipped and smiled prettily, and given the hat of the man in white, tried for his briefcase. He moved from her reach, however, and addressed himself to a lean young Japanese coming at him in a smile and a tuxedo. "My name is Aspiazu," he announced in Portuguese harshened by a slight German accent. "A private room is reserved for me." He looked to be in his early sixties and had cropped grey hair, vivid and cheery brown eyes, and a neat grey hairline moustache.

"Ah, Senhor Aspiazu!" the Japanese exclaimed in his own version of Portuguese. "Everything's ready for your party! Will you come this way, please? Just up these stairs. I'm sure you'll be happy when you see the arrangements."

"I'm happy now," the man in white said, smiling. "It's a pleasure to be in the city."

"You live in the country?"

The man in white, following the blond man up the stairs, nodded and sighed. "Yes," he said drily, "I live in the country." The black-haired man went after him, and the Japanese went last. "The first door on the right," he called ahead. "Will you remove your shoes before you go in, please?"

The blond man ducked to peer through an octagonal wall-opening, then braced a hand against a doorpost, raised his foot behind him, and pulled the

shoe from it. The man in white put forward a white-shod foot on the hallway's carpet, and the black-haired man crouched down and unfastened a gold buckle at the side of it. The blond man, having set both his shoes aside, opened an intricately carved door and went into a pale-green room beyond. The Japanese toed himself nimbly out of pumps. "Our best room, Senhor Aspiazu," he said. "Very nice."

"I'm sure it is." The man in white pressed white-gloved fingertips against a doorpost as he watched the removal of his second shoe.

"And our Imperial Dinner for seven, with beer, not sake, and brandy and cigars after."

The blond man came to the doorway. Small white scars darned his face; one of his ears had no lobe. He nodded and stepped back. The man in white, shorter now by more than normal heel-height, went into the room. The Japanese followed him.

The room was cool and sweet-smelling, a placid oblong silk-walled in the hazy pale green of its tatami floormats. At its centre, bamboo backrests with tan-and-white-patterned cushions faced three sides of a low black oblong table set with white plates and cups; three settings and backrests at each of the table's long sides and one at its right end. A shallow foot-well smaller than the table lay beneath it. At the room's right end another low black table stood against the wall, two electric burners set into its surface. The wall opposite was shoji screens of black-framed white paper. "Plenty of room for seven," the Japanese said, gesturing toward the central table. "And our best girls will be serving you. Prettiest too." He smiled and raised his eyebrows.

The man in white, pointing at the shoji screens, asked, "What's behind there?"

"Another private room, senhor."

"Is it being used tonight?"

"It hasn't been reserved, but a party might want it."

"I reserve it." The man in white gestured to the blond man to open the screens.

The Japanese looked at the blond man and at the man in white again. "It's a room for six," he said uncertainly. "sometimes eight."

"Of course." The man in white strolled away toward the end of the room. "I'll pay for eight more dinners." He bent to study the burners in the table. His fat briefcase moved against his trouser leg.

The blond man was sliding the screens apart; the Japanese hurried to help him, or perhaps to prevent him from damaging the screens. The room beyond proved to be a mirror-image of the first room, except that its ceiling lighting panel was dark and the table beneath it was set for six, two at each side and one at each end. The man in white had turned to look; the Japanese smiled across the room at him uncomfortably. "I'll only charge you if someone asks for it," he said, "and then only the difference between what we charge downstairs and what we charge up here."

The man in white, looking surprised, said, "How nice! Thank you." "Excuse me, please," the black-haired man said to the Japanese. He stood just within the room, his dark suit ruffled, his round swarthy face sheened with sweat. "Is there any way of closing this?" He pointed back towards the octagonal opening in the wall. His Portuguese was Brazil-accented.

"It's for the girls," the Japanese explained hopefully. "To see if you're ready for your next course."

"That's all right," the man in white told the black-haired man. "You'll be outside."

The black-haired man said, "I thought maybe he could ..." and he shrugged apologetically.

"Everything is satisfactory," the man in white said to the Japanese. "My guests will arrive at eight o'clock and—"

"I'll show them up."

"No need; one of my men will be waiting below. And after we eat we'll have a conference here."

"You can stay till three if you like."

"No need for that either, I hope! An hour should be sufficient. And now would you bring me please a glass of Dubonnet, red, with ice and a twist of lemon peel."

"Yes, senhor." The Japanese bowed.

"And is it possible to have more light? I plan to read while I wait."

"I'm sorry, senhor, this is all there is."

"I'll manage. Thank you."

"Thank *you*, Senhor Aspiazu." The Japanese bowed again, bowed less deeply to the blond man, bowed hardly at all to the black-haired man, and went quickly from the room.

The black-haired man closed the door, and facing it, raised his arms high, curved his fingers, and set the tips of them on top of the doorframe as if to play a keyboard there. He moved his hands slowly apart.

The man in white went and stood with his back to the wall-opening while the blond man went to the backrest at the end of the table and crouched beside it. He pressed its tan-and-white cushions and lifted them from the bamboo frame and put them aside. He inspected the frame, turned it over to look at its bottom, and put it aside with the cushions. He felt the tatami matting all around the end of the table; with widespread hands he explored the plaited grass, gently pressing.

Getting down on his knees, he thrust his blond head in under the table and looked into the footwell. He bent lower, turned his head, and looked up with one blue eye at the table's underside, scanning it slowly from end to end.

He backed from the table, took the bamboo frame, restored its two cushions, and placed the backrest at an accessible angle. Rising, he stood attentively behind it.

The man in white came, unbuttoning his jacket. He set his briefcase on the floor and turned and lowered himself carefully, finding the backrest's arms. He folded his legs in under the table, his feet toward the footwell.

The blond man, bending, pushed at the backrest and squared it to the table.

"*Danke*," the man in white said.

"*Bitte*," the blond man said, and went and stood with his back against the wall-opening.

The man in white peeled at a glove, looking approvingly at the table before him. The black-haired man, arms high, side-stepped slowly across the opening between the two rooms, fingering along the top of a projecting black lintel.

A soft tapping sounded; the blond man moved to the door and the black-haired man turned, lowering his arms. The blond man listened, and opened the door to a pink-kimonoed waitress who came in with her head bowed, holding a tinkling glass and its tray. Her white-mittened feet whispered over the tatami.

"Ah!" the man in white exclaimed happily, folding his gloves. His enthusiastic expression faltered as the waitress, a flat-faced woman, crouched beside him and moved the napkin and chopsticks from his plate. "And what's your name, dear?" he asked with strained jollity.

"Tsuruko, senhor." The waitress put a paper coaster down.

"Tsuruko!" With wide eyes and pursed lips the man looked to the blond man and the black-haired man, as if marveling with them at an impressive revelation.

The waitress, having put the drink down, rose and backed away.

"Until my guests come, Tsuruko, I don't want to be disturbed."

"Yes, senhor." She turned and hurried close-kneed from the room.

The blond man closed the door and stepped back to his place before the wall-opening. The black-haired man turned and raised his hands to the lintel-top.

"Tsu, ru, ko," the man in white said, drawing his briefcase close to his side. In German he said, "If she's a pretty one, what do the not-so-pretty ones look like?"

The blond man grunted a laugh.

The man in white finger-sprang the lockflap of his briefcase and opened it wide enough so that it stayed open. He tucked his folded gloves into an end of it, and leafing through the edges of papers and manila envelopes, drew from among them a thin magazine. He set it down—*Lancet*, the British medical journal—on the table beside his plate. Scanning its cover, he took from his breast pocket a frayed and faded petit-point eyeglass case, from which he drew a pair of black-framed glasses. Opening them, he put them on, pocketed the case and side-fingered his thin bristly moustache. His hands were small, pink, clean, young-looking. From inside his jacket he brought a gold cigarette case on which a lengthy handwritten inscription was engraved.

The blond man stood before the wall-opening. The black-haired man examined the walls, and the floor, and the serving table, and the backrests. He moved one of the middle table settings aside, spread his handkerchief in its place, and stepping up on it, opened with a screw-driver the chrome-bordered lighting panel overhead.

The man in white read *Lancet*, sipping now and then at his Dubonnet, smoking a cigarette. He hissed air intently through a gap in his upper teeth. Occasionally he seemed surprised by what he read. Once he exclaimed in English, "Absolutely wrong, sir!"



The guests arrived within a period of four minutes, the first checking his hat but not his attaché case at three minutes of eight, the last at one minute after. When each made his way through waiting groups and couples to the tuxedoed Japanese, he was graciously directed to the blond man at the foot of

the stairs; words were exchanged and the guest was shown upward, to the black-haired man pointing at the row of shoes beside the open door.

Six well-dressed businessmen in their middle fifties, fair-skinned, Nordic; sock-footed, they nodded politely to one another and bent to present themselves in Portuguese and Spanish to the man in white. "Ignacio Carreras, Doctor. An honor to meet you."

"Hello! How are you? I can't get up, I'm trapped here. This is José de Lima from Rio. Ignacio Carreras from Buenos Aires."

"Doctor? I'm Jorge Ramos."

"My friend! Your brother was like this right hand to me. Forgive me for sitting; I'm trapped. Ignacio Carreras from Buenos Aires, José de Lima from Rio. Jorge Ramos from right here in Paulo."

Two of the guests were old friends, happy to see each other. "In Santiago! Where have *you* been?" "In Rio!" Another introduced himself with a heel-click that failed: "Antônio Paz, Pôrto Alegre."

They lowered themselves in at the sides of the table, joking about their awkwardness, groaning; settled themselves with portfolios and attaché cases close beside; shook napkins open, named their drinks to a pretty young waitress gracefully crouching. Flat-faced Tsuruko set a steaming rolled-up washcloth before each man; the man in white and his guests scrubbed appreciatively at their hands, wiped at their mouths.

Wiping away, apparently, Portuguese and Spanish. German began to emerge; German names were exchanged.

"Ah, I know you. You served under Stangl, right? At Treblinka?"

"Did you say 'Farnbach'? My wife is a Farnbach, from Langen near Frankfurt."

The drinks were served, and small plates of appetizers—baby shrimp and balls of browned meat. The man in white demonstrated the use of chopsticks. The men who were adept gave guidance to those who weren't.

"A fork, for God's sake!"

"No, no!" the man in white laughed to the pretty young waitress. "We'll make him learn! He has to learn!"

Her name was Mori. The girl in the plain kimono, bringing plates and covered bowls to Tsuruko at the serving table, blushed and said, "Yoshiko, senhor."

The men ate and drank. They talked about an earthquake in Peru, and the new American president, Ford.

Bowls of clear soup were served, and more plates of food, fried and raw; tea was poured.

The men talked about the oil situation and its probable lessening of the West's sympathy for Israel.

More food was served—strips of cooked meat, chunks of lobster—and Japanese beer.

The men talked about Japanese women. Kleist-Carreras, a thin man with a glass eye that moved badly, told a wonderfully funny story about a friend's misadventure in a Tokyo brothel.

The tuxedoed Japanese came in and asked how everything was. "First rate!" the man in white assured him. "Excellent!" The other men agreed, in Portuguese—Spanish—German.

Melon was served. More tea.

The men talked about fishing, and different ways of cooking fish.

The man in white asked Mori to marry him; she smiled and pleaded a husband and two children.

The men climbed up from creaking backrests, stretched their arms and stood on tiptoe, patted their stomachs. A few, the man in white among them, went out into the hallway to find the men's room. The others talked about the man in white: how charming he was, and how lively and youthful for—was it sixty-three? Sixty-four?

The first group came back; the others went.

The table was clean black, set with brandy snifters, ashtrays, and a box of glass-tubed cigars. Mori went around crouching with a bottle, feeding each snifter a bottomful of dark amber. Tsuruko and Yoshiko whispered at the serving table, disagreeing about the clearing up. "Out, girls," the man in white said, going to his place. "We wish to speak in private."

Tsuruko shooed Yoshiko before her; apologized passing the man: "We'll clear up later." Mori gave the last snifter its brandy, set the bottle on the table's unoccupied end, and scurried toward the door, standing aside with her head bowed as the rest of the men came in.

The man in white lowered himself into his backrest. Farnbach-Paz helped him position it.

The black-haired man looked in at the door, counted the men, and drew the door closed.

The men lowered themselves into their places, gravely this time, not joking. The cigar box was passed.

The wall-opening was blocked on the other side by dark-grey suiting.



The man in white took a cigarette from his gold case, closed it, looked at it, and offered it to Farnbach on his right, who shook his bald-shaven head; but realizing he was being invited to read, not smoke, he took the case and held it out to focus on it. His blue eyes widened in recognition. "Ohhh!" He sucked air in through thick puckered lips as he read. Smiling excitedly at the man in white, he said, "How marvellous! Even better than a medal! May I?" He gestured with the case toward Kleist beside him.

The man in white nodded, smiling and pink-cheeked, and turned to put his cigarette to the flame of a lighter held waiting at his left. Squinting against smoke, he drew his briefcase nearer his side and opened it wide again. "Wonderful!" Kleist said. "look, Schwimmer." The man in white found and pulled from his briefcase a sheaf of papers, which he set before him, moving his brandy aside. He put his cigarette into the notch of a white ashtray. Watching handsome young-looking Schwimmer pass the case across the table toward Mundt, he took his eyeglass case from his breast pocket, the glasses from the case. He smiled at admiring smiles from Schwimmer and Kleist, pocketed the eyeglass case, shook the glasses open and slid them on. A whistle from Mundt, long and low. The man in white took up his cigarette, drew on it savoringly and set it in the ashtray again. He squared the papers before him and studied the topmost one, reaching for his brandy. "Mm, mm, mm!"—from Traunsteiner. The man in white sipped brandy, thumbed the bottom of the sheaf of papers.

The cigarette case came back to him, from silver-haired Hessen, blue eyes bright in his gaunt face. "What a wonderful thing to possess!" "Yes," the man in white agreed, nodding, "I'm enormously proud of it." He put the case down beside the papers.

"Who wouldn't be?" Farnbach asked.

The man in white put his snifter aside and said, "Let's get down to business now, boys." Tipping his cropped grey head, he pushed his glasses lower on his nose and looked at the men over them. They faced him attentively, cigars poised. Silence took the room; only a low whine of air conditioning persisted against it.

"You know what you're going out to do," the man in white said, "and you know it's a long job. I'll fill you in on the details now." He leaned his head forward, looking down through his glasses. "Ninety-four men have to die on or near certain dates in the next two and a half years," he said, reading. 'sixteen of them are in West Germany, fourteen in Sweden, thirteen in England, twelve in the United States, ten in Norway, nine in Austria, eight in

Holland and six each in Denmark and Canada. Total, ninety-four. The first is to die on or near October sixteenth; the last, on or near the twenty-third of April, 1977."

He sat back and looked at the men again. "*Why* must these men die? And why on or near their particular dates?" He shook his head. "Not now; later you can be told that. But this I *can* tell you now: their deaths are the final step in an operation to which I and the leaders of the Organization have devoted many years, enormous effort, and a large part of the Organization's fortune. It's the most important operation the Organization has ever undertaken, and "important" is a thousand times too weak a word to describe it. *The hope and the destiny of the Aryan race lie in the balance.* No exaggeration here, my friends; literal truth: the destiny of the Aryan folk—to hold sway over the Slays and the Semites, the Black and the Yellow—will be fulfilled if the operation succeeds, will not be fulfilled if the operation fails. So "important" isn't a strong enough word, is it? "Holy", maybe? Yes, that's closer. It's a *holy* operation you're taking part in."

He picked up his cigarette, tapped ash away, and carried its shortness carefully to his lips.

The men looked at one another silently, awed. They reminded themselves to draw at cigars, to sip brandy. They looked at the man in white again; he ground his cigarette in the ashtray, looked at them.

"You'll be leaving Brazil with new identities," he said, and touched the briefcase at his side. "Everything's here. Genuine stuff, not forgeries. And you'll have ample funds for the two and a half years. In diamonds"—he smiled—"which I'm afraid you'll have to take through customs in the uncomfortable way."

The men smiled and shrugged.

"You'll each be responsible for the men in one or a pair of countries. You have from thirteen to eighteen assignments each, but a few of the men will already have died of natural causes. They're sixty-five years old. Not too many of them will have died, though, as they were in excellent health as of their fifty-second year, with no signs of incipient disorder."

"All the men are sixty-five?" Hessen asked, looking puzzled.

"Almost all," the man in white said. "That is, they will be when their dates come around. A few will be a year or two younger or older." He lifted aside the paper from which he had read the countries and numbers, and picked up the other nine or ten sheets. "The addresses," he told the men, "are their addresses in 1961 and 62, but you shouldn't have any trouble locating

them today. Most are probably still where they were. They're family men, stable; civil servants mostly—tax examiners, principals of schools and so on; men of minor authority."

"They have that in common too?" Schwimmer asked.

The man in white nodded.

Hessen said, "A remarkably homogeneous group. The members of another organization, opposed to ours?"

"They don't even know one another, or us," the man in white said. "At least I hope they don't."

"They'll be retired now, won't they?" Kleist asked.

"If they're sixty-five?" His glass eye looked elsewhere.

"Yes, most of them will probably be retired," the man in white agreed. "But if they've moved, you can be sure they'll have taken care to leave proper forwarding addresses. Schwimmer, you get England. Thirteen, the smallest number." He handed a typewritten sheet to Kleist to pass on to Schwimmer. "No reflection on your abilities," he smiled at Schwimmer. "On the contrary, a recognition of them. I hear you can turn yourself into an Englishman of whom the Queen herself wouldn't be suspicious."

"You do know how to flatter one, old man," Schwimmer drawled in Oxonian English, fingering his sandy moustache as he glanced at the sheet. "Actually, the old girl's not all that bright, y' know."

The man in white smiled. "That talent might very well prove useful," he said, "though your new identity, like all the others", is that of a German national. You're travelling salesmen, boys; maybe between assignments you'll have time to discover a few farmers' daughters." He looked at his next sheet. "Farnbach, you'll be travelling in Sweden." He handed the sheet to his right. "With fourteen customers for your fine imported merchandise."

Farnbach, taking the sheet, leaned forward, his hairless brow-ridge creased by a frown. "All of them elderly civil servants," he said, "and by killing them we fulfill the destiny of the Aryan race?"

The man in white looked at him for a moment. "Was that a question or a statement, Farnbach?" he asked. "It sounded a little like a question there at the end, and if so, I'm surprised. Because you, and all of you, were chosen for this operation on the basis of your unquestioning obedience as well as your other attributes and talents."

Farnbach sat back, his thick lips closed and his nostrils flaring, his face flushed.

The man in white looked at his next clipped-together sheets. "No, Farnbach, I'm sure it was a statement," he said, "and in that case I have to correct it slightly: by killing them you *prepare the way* for the fulfillment of the destiny, et cetera. It will come; not in April 1977, when the ninety-fourth man dies, but in time. Only obey your orders. Traunsteiner, you've got Norway and Denmark." He handed the sheets away. "Ten in one, six in the other."

Traunsteiner took the sheets, his square red face set in a grim demonstration: Unquestioning Obedience.

"Holland and the upper part of Germany," the man in white said, "are for Sergeant Kleist. Sixteen again, eight and eight."

"Thank you, Herr Doktor."

"The eight in lower Germany and nine in Austria—make seventeen for Sergeant Mundt."

Mundt—round-faced, crop-headed, eyeglassed—grinned as he waited for the sheets to reach him. "When I'm in Austria," he said, "I'll take care of Yakov Liebermann while I'm at it." Traunsteiner, passing the sheets to him, smiled with gold-filled teeth.

"Yakov Liebermann," the man in white said, "has already been taken care of, by time, and ill health, and the failure of the bank where he kept his Jewish money. He's hunting for lecture-bookings now, not for us. Forget about him."

"Of course," Mundt said. "I was only joking."

"And I'm not. To the police and the press he's a boring old nuisance with a file cabinet full of ghosts; kill him and you're liable to turn him into a neglected hero with living enemies still to be caught."

"I never heard of the Jew-bastard."

"I wish I could say the same."

The men laughed.

The man in white handed his last pair of sheets to Hessen. "And for you, eighteen," he said, smiling. "Twelve in the United States and six in Canada. I count on your being your brother's brother."

"I am," Hessen said, lifting his silver head, the sharp-planed face proud. "You'll see I am."

The man in white looked around at the men. "I told you," he said, "that the men are to be killed on or near the date given with each one's name. "On" is of course better than "near", but only microscopically so. A week one way or the other will make no real difference, and even a month will be acceptable

if you have reason to think it will make an assignment less risky. As for methods: whichever you choose, provided only that they vary and that there's never any suggestion of premeditation. The authorities in no country must suspect that an operation is under way. It shouldn't be difficult for you. Bear in mind that these are sixty-five-year-old men: their eyes are failing; they have slow reflexes, diminished strength. They're likely to drive poorly and cross streets carelessly, to suffer falls, to be knifed and robbed by hoodlums. There are dozens of ways in which such men can be killed without attracting high-level attention." He smiled. "I trust you to find them."

Kleist said, "Can we hire someone else to take an assignment or to help with it? If that seems the best way of bringing it off?"

The man in white turned his hands out in wondering surprise. "You're sensible men with good judgement," he reminded Kleist; "that's why we chose you. However you think the job should be done, that's the way to do it. As long as the men die at the right time and the authorities don't suspect it's an operation, you have a completely free hand." He raised a finger. "No, not completely; I'm sorry. One proviso, and it's a very important one. We don't want the men's families involved, either as co-victims in any sort of accident or—in the case, say, of younger wives who might be open to romantic overtures—as accomplices. I repeat: the families aren't to be involved in any way, and only outsiders used as accomplices."

"Why should we need accomplices?" Traunsteiner asked, and Kleist said, "You never know what you're liable to run up against."

"I've been all over Austria," Mundt said, looking at one of his sheets, "and there are places here I've never heard of."

"Yes," Farnbach groused, looking at his single sheet, "I know Sweden but I certainly never heard of any 'Rasbo'."

"It's a small town about fifteen kilometres northeast of Uppsala," the man in white said. "That's Bertil Hedin, isn't it? He's the postmaster there."

Farnbach looked at him, his brow uplifted.

The man in white met his gaze, and smiled patiently. "And killing Postmaster Hedin," he said, "is every bit as important—correction, as holy—as I said it was. Come on now, Farnbach, be the fine soldier you've always been."

Farnbach shrugged and looked at his sheet again. "You're ... the doctor," he said.

"So I am," the man in white said, still smiling as he turned to his briefcase.

Hessen, looking at his sheets, said, "Here's a good one: "Kankakee"."

"Right outside Chicago," the man in white said, bringing up a stack of manila envelopes between spread-open hands. He spilled them onto the table—half a dozen large swollen envelopes, each lettered at a corner with a name: *Cabral, Carreras, de Lima*—a snifter was snatched from the sliding rush of them.

"Sorry," the man in white said, sitting back. He gestured for the envelopes to be distributed, and took his glasses off. "Don't open them here," he said, pinching his nose, rubbing it. "I checked everything myself this morning. German passports with Brazilian entrance stamps and the right visas, working permits, driver's licences, business cards and papers; everything's there. When you get back to your rooms, practice your new signatures and sign whatever needs signing. Your plane tickets are in there too, and some currency of the destination countries, a few thousand cruzeiros" worth."

"The diamonds?" Kleist asked, holding his *Carreras* envelope in both hands before him.

"Are in the safe at headquarters." The man in white homed his glasses in their petit-point case. "You'll pick them up on your way to the airport—you leave tomorrow—and you'll give Ostreicher your present passports and personal papers to hold for your return."

Mundt said, "And I just got used to "Gómez", and grinned. The others laughed.

"What are we getting?" Schwimmer asked, zipping his portfolio. "In diamonds, I mean."

"About forty carats each."

"Ouch," Farnbach said.

"No, the tubes are quite small. A dozen or so three-carat stones, that's all. They're each worth about seventy thousand cruzeiros in today's market, and more in tomorrow's, with inflation. So you'll have the equivalent of at least nine-hundred-thousand-odd cruzeiros for the two and a half years. You'll live very nicely, in the manner befitting salesmen for large German firms, and you'll have more than enough money for any equipment you need. Incidentally, be sure not to take any weapons with you on the plane; they're searching *everybody* these days. Leave anything you've got with Ostreicher. You'll have no trouble selling the diamonds. In fact, you'll probably have to drive buyers away. Does that cover everything?"

"Checking in?" Hessen asked, putting his attaché case by his side.

"Didn't I mention that? The first of each month, by phone to your company's Brazilian branch—headquarters, of course. Keep it businesslike. You in particular, Hessen; I'm sure nine out of ten phones in the States are tapped."

Traunsteiner said, "I haven't spoken Norwegian since the war."

"Study." The man in white smiled. "Anything else? No? Well then, let's have some more brandy and I'll think of an appropriate toast to speed you on your way." He picked up his cigarette case, opened it, and took out a cigarette. He closed the case and looked at it—and bringing his white sleeve to its inscribed face, briskly polished it.



Tsuruko bowed and thanked the senhor. Tucking the folded bills down into the waist of her kimono, she slipped past him and hurried to the serving table, where Yoshiko was nesting together small bowls of drying leftovers. "He gave me twenty-five!" Yoshiko whispered in Japanese. "What did you get?"

"I don't know," Tsuruko whispered, crouching low, putting the leaning cover onto a rice bowl beneath the table. "I didn't look yet." With both hands she brought out the wide flat red-lacquered bowl.

"Fifty, I'll bet!"

"I hope so." Rising, Tsuruko hurried with the bowl past the senhor and one of his guests joking with Mori, and out into the hallway. She zigzagged her way through the other guests—handing shoehorns to one another, bending, crouching—and shouldered a swing-door open.

She carried the bowl down a narrow flight of stairs lit by wire-strung bare bulbs, and along an equally narrow corridor with walls of plastered lath.

The corridor opened into a steamy jangling kitchen where antique ceiling fans slowly turned their blades over a hubbub of waitresses, cooks, and helpers. Tsuruko in her pink kimono carried the wide red bowl among them; she passed a helper quick-chopping vegetables, and another who glanced up at her as he hauled a tray of dishes from a dripping glass-walled washer.

She set the bowl on a table where boxes of mushrooms stood stacked, and turning, took from a canvas hamper of linens a used napkin, which she shook out and spread on the metal tabletop. She lifted the bowl's cover and

put it aside. Within the red bowl a black-and-chrome tape recorder lay, a Panasonic with English-marked controls, the sprockets of the cassette in its windowed compartment smoothly turning. Tsuruko hovered a hand above the buttons, frowned indecisively, and lifted the recorder from the bowl and set it on the napkin. She folded the napkin sides up around it.

Holding the wrapped recorder to her bosom, she went to a glass-paned door and took hold of its knob. A man sitting close by sewing at an apron looked up at her.

"Leftovers," she said, flashing the napkined shape at him. "An old woman comes by."

The man looked at her with tired eyes in a pinched yellow face; he looked down at his sewing hands.

She opened the door and went out into an areaway. A cat sprang from garbage cans and fled toward a far-off passage end of streetlights and neon.

Tsuruko closed the door behind her and leaned into darkness. "Hey, are you there?" she called softly in Portuguese. "Senhor Hunter?"

A figure hurried from the side of the passage, a tall lean man with a shoulderbag. "You do it?"

"Yes," she said, unwrapping the recorder. "It's still going. I couldn't think which button turns it off."

"Good, good, no difference." He was a young man; his fine-featured face and crinkly brown hair caught the door's light. "Where you put that?" he asked.

"In a rice bowl under the serving table." She gave the recorder to him. "With the cover leaning against it so they wouldn't see."

He tilted the recorder toward the door and pressed one of its buttons and another; a high-pitched twittering sang. Tsuruko, watching, moved aside to allow him more light. "Near of where they sit?" he asked her. His Portuguese was bad.

"From here to there." She gestured from herself to the nearest garbage can.

"Good, good." The young man pressed a button, stopping the twittering, and pressed another: the voice of the man in white spoke in German, distantly, an echo surrounding it. "Very good!" the young man said, and stopped the voice with another button. He pointed to the recorder. "When you begin this?"

"After they finished eating, just before he sent us out. They talked for almost an hour."



"They leave?"

"They were going when I came down."

"Good, good." The young man tugged at the zipper of his blue-and-white airline bag. He was wearing a short blue denim jacket and blue jeans; he looked to be about twenty-three, North American. "You are a big helper to me," he told Tsuruko, fitting the recorder into the bag. "My magazine is very happy when I bring home a story about Senhor Aspiazu. He is the most famous maker of the cinema." Reaching to his hip, he brought out a wallet and opened it toward the light.

Tsuruko watched, holding the balled napkin. "A North American magazine?" she asked.

"Yes," the young man said, separating bills. "*Movie Story*. A very important magazine of the cinema." He smiled brightly at Tsuruko and gave bills to her. "One hundred and fifty cruzeiros. Many thanks. You are a big helper to me."

"Thank you." She glanced at the bills and smiled at him, bobbed her head.

"Your restaurant smells like a good one," he said, pocketing his wallet. "I am in much hunger while I wait."

"Would you like me to get something for you?" She tucked the bills into her kimono. "I could—"

"No, no." He touched her hand. "I eat at my hotel. Thanks. Many thanks." He gave her hand a squeeze, and turned and went long-legging into the passage.

"You're welcome, Senhor Hunter!" she called after him. She watched for a moment, then turned and opened the door and went in.

*(End of excerpt)*