

# Project ReWrite Written Report

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## Introduction

Hi, we are Project ReWrite, a group of Secondary Three students researching and analysing on alternate fate a.k.a. alternate history and alternate reality. For our product, we will be writing a short novel manuscript on an alternate World War II.

### Rationale

We realise that not many people think of the consequences of their actions and we want to show them that every small choice we make can affect the present, the society and ourselves as an individual. We plan to make the public understand more about alternate fate through our product and hopefully achieve the same effect as [AlternateHistory.com](http://AlternateHistory.com), an online forum for its users to discuss about alternate history, of promoting and deepening the understanding of alternate fate of the public.

### Significance

Despite the claim that [AlternateHistory.com](http://AlternateHistory.com) having over 10,000 users and over 400,000 discussion threads, it remains a fact that alternate fate is not a widely researched and discussed topic in society as most people only think of it as “fantasies”. We want to show them that alternate fate is not just mere fantasies but something that can affect our lives. By understanding alternate fate, it can help people think of the different outcomes of their choices that they make every day. By

doing so, many people can avoid making choices that they may regret some time later in their life.

## Research

### Research Questions

- What is alternate fate?
- How wide spread is the concept of alternate fate in society?
- What are the different definitions or perspectives of alternate fate in the world?
- What are the subcategories of alternate fate?
- What led to the misconception that alternate fate is just “a fantasy”?

### Research Scope

The scope of research will mainly be on literature works and books that incorporated alternate fate as one of the concepts as well as the different theories of alternate fate by renowned scientists such as the late Stephen Hawking.

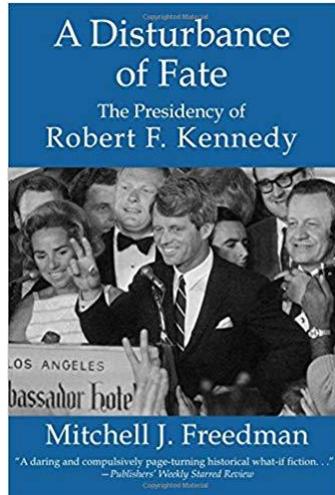
## Literature Review

### Definition of Alternate Fate

Alternate fate is further broken down into alternate history and alternate reality. Alternate history is a genre of fiction in which the author speculates on how the course of history might have been altered if a particular historical event had had a different outcome. Alternate reality often serves as a synonym for parallel universe, which is a hypothetical self-contained reality co-existing with one's own. Despite the fact that these terms are mostly found in fictions, it is a concept that can be applied in our everyday life, an example would be when a person is making a choice, this can be split into two possibilities OR two parallel universes where one of its reality is different from the other.

## Literature Analysis of Books

### Book 1: A Disturbance of Fate



*A Disturbance of Fate*  
by Mitchell J. Freedman

- Displays a different outlook on U.S. historical events
- Portrays a possible parallel outcome to U.S. if Mr Robert F. Kennedy survived the assassination
- After surviving the assassination attempt, he withdrew American troops from Vietnam, and later proposed simultaneous US and Soviet military withdrawal from Europe, thus resolving the Cold War
- Compare this to our product, where we also change a fact that could have changed the outcome of WWII (Albert Einstein)

### Book 2: Gone

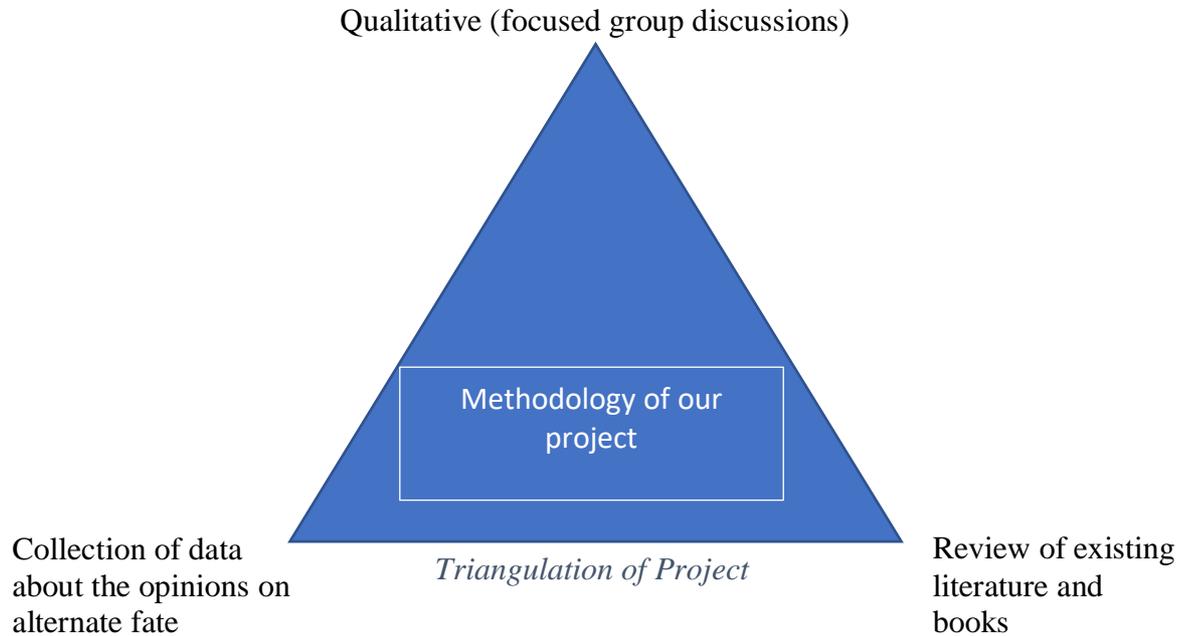


*Gone*  
by Michael Grant

- A barrier cutting off an area from the “outside world” creating a space of alternate reality
- Throughout the novel, the protagonist would be seen in the alternate reality, showcasing the changes in the present due to different decisions made in the past

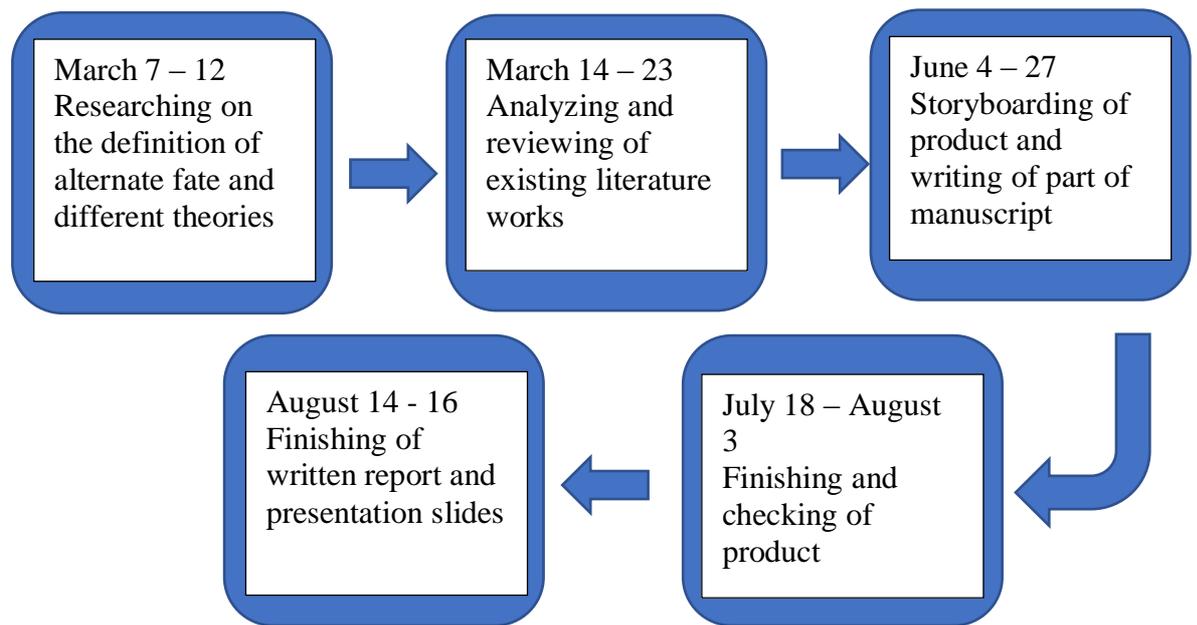
## Methodology

### Methodology (Explanation)



Our methodology focuses on the practice of triangulation, a commonly used method that allows us to validate our results, and fully understand the theories of Alternate Fate. In doing this, we have used qualitative sources in conducting our research. In addition, we have also reviewed the existing literature in the field, as well as the collection of data about the opinion of the public on alternate fate to further understand the general definition and application of alternate fate from different perspective

## Timeline



## Our Product

### Synopsis

Collin, who hated History, wondered into the past where he was tasked with something important, something so important that if done, it will change the timeline he belonged to into a totally different world from what he knew of. Follow Collin in his adventure to make his “important” choices of his life and see how reality changed for him, because of him.

### Main Characters

- Collin (refer to as Ralph by Nazis)  
The main protagonist, a 15-year-old student that hated the subject of History, radicalized to become work for the Nazi. He made certain wrong choices of his own and changed the present timeline he originally belonged to.
- Jack  
Collin’s squad leader in Nazi Germany of the past
- Hitler  
The tyrant of a leader of the Nazi Party that we all know of as the person that started WWII
- Einstein (Schluss)  
The genius scientist that invented the atomic bomb

## Integration of Literary Theories into Manuscript

Theories	Chapter
Alternate History Theory (Chapters coloured in green)	<b>Chapter 3</b> ... <a href="#">pg 15</a> <b>Chapter 6</b> ... <a href="#">pg 24</a> <b>Chapter 7</b> ... <a href="#">pg 26</a>
Alternate Reality Theory (Chapter coloured in red)	<b>Chapter 5</b> ... <a href="#">pg 22</a>
Parallel Universe Theory (Chapters coloured in purple)	<b>Epilogue</b> ... <a href="#">pg 29</a>

\*Click on the chapters in the “Chapter” section of the table to go to the respective chapters

## Appendix A: Product

### **The Other Library**

#### **Prologue**

##### **Just Another History Class...**

Collin slumped on his chair. History class had just begun yet he did not bring his history textbook. ‘Well, never gave a damn about my worst subject anyways’ he thought to himself. To him, history was nothing but memorising and regurgitating facts to earn marks - essentially, a hindrance. As Ms Petosa, the history teacher, drones on about Hitler and his conquests in WW2, Collin felt himself drifting away, into a deep deep land...

The smell of smoke invaded Collin’s nostrils, forcing him awake. As he opened his eyes, he found himself in a desolate land. Buildings were burning while flattened slabs of rubble lay around the war-torn hell. A building, consumed by devilish and incandescent flames, collapsed on the ground with a great thunder, leaving the whole place covered in rubble and debris.

Collin scrambled to his feet as he panically observed his surroundings. *Where is this place?* He wondered as he brushed the dust off his pants, attempting to hide his fear behind a mask of curiosity.

# Chapter 1

## The Library

In a deep dark corner of the library, a book sat neglected and uncared for. It was dusty and old, likened to any other book one could find in this long-forgotten archive. However, this book was by no means ordinary. Its old leather cover, scribbled with runes and texts long lost to the passage of time, began to glow. The book knew that something phenomenal and world-changing was coming. It knew that someone's life was about to be turned upside down.

“Wake up!” a shrill, distinctly feminine voice cut through the air like a knife. With a thud, the hard leather cover of Ms Petosa's personal textbook collided with the back of Collin's head. He shot up, suddenly awake. “Does this classroom look like your bed to you?! Does it?” Ms Petosa shook her head and let out a deep sigh. Collin's face flushed, feeling the heat of his classmates' gleeful stares radiating at him and scorching his skin bright red. The class was laughing, relishing his discomfort. He squirmed in his chair, waiting uneasily for her to bring the hammer of judgement down upon him.

After what seemed like an eternity, she opened her mouth. Her smile showing just a hint of satisfaction, she consigned him to the library. The darkened hallways, usually filled with the joyous screaming of schoolchildren and the angry beratings of livid teachers, were completely and utterly devoid of life. A shadow hung over the dejected Collin as he trudged, hands in his pockets, down the empty hallways towards the two large wooden doors that guarded the entrance to the library.

“Yeah right. Some assignment she gave me. ‘Go to the library and read up all you can about important events in the history of mankind. I'm sure you'll find some in the historical section!’ what is so good about learning whatever's already in the past anyway?” Grumbling to himself, Collin stopped and looked up at the imposing doors before him.

“You know, they really are big. And quite impressive. They do like those medieval castle gates y'know?” he turned around, hoping to share his realisation with his friends, before realising that they were still in class. Yep, in class while he was stuck with this rotten punishment.

He turned back to the doors. Large wooden behemoths embossed right at the top with a pair of gargoyles, their reptilian eyes boring holes through Collin's skull. Guarding the entrance were two majestic lions that seemed to be rearing back their heads and roaring, while medieval knights pushed them back with spears and swords. Disgruntled, Collin shoved open the doors and ventured inside.

His jaw dropped. It was a humongous room, with lines of books filling every wall. Intriguing books lined every shelf in sight, yet all appeared to have been at least a century old, dusty and littered with cobwebs. Hurrying over to the nearest shelf, he gazed in awe at the hundreds of books, all seeming to contain knowledge that is infinitely more interesting than the textbooks in school. Impressively, the books were arranged in meticulous order, each shelf filled with a different topic, with this one being on natural disasters. Scampering over to another shelf, he found a shelf filled end to end with cookbooks. Searching for his assigned topic of 'history' under the headings that accompanied each bookshelf, he scurried to the section for topics starting with 'H'.

At long last, in a secluded, rarely visited part of the library, he found a small shelf. This shelf was much smaller than the others, approximately a third their size, and only half filled with books. Not only that, the books were also all about minor things, like 'The History of Mitochondria' or other irrelevant things like 'The Complete Insect Saga'. His hopes dwindling with each and every title he came across, Collin was starting to feel that it was going to be a really long day for him. Truly, it would be, just not in the way he would expect.

At the very end of the shelf, a thick, leather bound book came to life. Runes lit up, with ancient text spiralling around and around the embossed title. Enthralled, Collin picked it up and read the title: "A complete history of the crucibles of mankind" that alone, without the runes, was enough to pique his interest. Tentatively, he flipped open the book.

On the very first page, he found not words, but a single picture. A picture of furious war. Noticing the flag bearing an eagle perched atop a swastika flying in the background, Collin recognised the scene immediately. What he was seeing was a picture of the most gruesome, bloody and costly conflict in recorded history: World War II.

All of a sudden, the walls began to fold in around him, the runes glowing brighter than ever. The world spiralled round and round like the pattern of the runes, circling, capturing, hypnotising. The books began to distort, words melting into one another, colours and shapes sucked into the swirling vortex. The last thing Collin remembered before the world went dark, was the eagle in the picture, melting into golden paint.

## Chapter 2

### Alter-Nazi Germany

Opening his eyes, Collin looked around in disbelief. He was in the exact same library! The features were all the same. The very same whitewashed walls, the familiar musk of old books whiling away on the shelves, the very same imposing bookshelves that towered over him.

Shakily, Collin got up to his feet. His arms almost gave out on him as he supported the gargantuan disbelief and confusion of what had just happened. His brain was still mush, so he gathered up all his remaining reason and tried to take in the situation.

“Okay, so some weird schizophrenic stuff just happened to me, yeah I get that...” but something was still nagging in the deepest vestiges of his mind. And then it hit him. No one had come to check on him, even though he had collapsed in the middle of the library!

Stumbling around the library, he found it completely devoid of life, not a single soul in sight. Sticking his head round a damp corner, he whispered quietly, making sure to follow the library rules. A hushed ghost of a sound drifted through the walls of the otherwise silent library. “Hello? Is anyone there? Anyone at all?”

Desperation crept into his voice as he fumbled around in the dark, searching for someone, anyone. His mind performed gymnastics in his head, search for any solace, a consolation that he was still there, and that someone was out there. He didn’t want to be alone. In the midst of his chaos, he saw a vaguely different shape. It was a box. Well, more like a rectangle made of some hard material, with an indescribably half-human shape atop it.

Some kind of centaur? Where was he anyways? He shook his head and gulped. “Hello? Who... are you?” Silence. An awkward air hung in the vast stillness of the space between Collin and the ‘thing’. “So... who? Wh-what?” A pause. And then it spoke.

It wasn’t really something you could call speech. A garbled, alien language came out. From what Collin could make out, it was something along the lines of “Where Biss Doo?”. In

reality however, the words were “Wer bist du?”, and Collin was in Germany. However, he had not realised that fact yet, and wouldn’t for at least the next two paragraphs.

Somewhere, at some point of time, someone must have flipped the light switch, for rows after rows of fluorescent light sticks came to life. The dull ‘dak dak dak’ of the rows of lights lighting up in succession were tangibly audible above the dull silence of the otherwise empty library.

The blaring lights illuminated the large circular room, casting golden light over the ‘thing’. Collin’s eyes widened. What he had previously thought to be the legs of the centaur, was actually the librarian’s desk! What a relief! He looked up, expecting to see the female librarian’s stern face, but was met with a shock. It was a man!

He had a stern, gruff face, weathered by harsh reality, and a thick, handlebar moustache clinging to his lips. Further down, his shirt was... not a suit or an ironed shirt, but an army uniform! And a different one than those Collin had seen in his father’s room! Atop his bald head perched a hat. A pea green hat.

That hat was peculiar in the fact that it was designed in a rather unfamiliar way. Beneath the green fabric of the hat sat a black plastic peak, and on the fabric itself were red and white stripes and an insignia. Perhaps by some trick of fate, some small, little chance, that insignia was a carbon copy of the same eagle-borne insignia he had seen when he first opened the book.

Without a shred of doubt, that man was a soldier. Now, what was a soldier doing sitting in the librarian’s chair? Then, out of the corner of his eye, he saw it. The small, minute differences between the librarian’s desk he had seen before and this one. The first, most glaring difference was the placard. It used to state the name ‘Mrs. Grizelda J Witherwall’, but now it read: ‘Herr Strauss Jungmann’ and underneath that, in big, bold words the title: ‘Wachtmeister’.

Collin’s eyes drifted over to the chair now. It had changed from a black leather swivelling armchair with plastic arms, one you could find at any furniture store in the country,

to a velvet Victorian armchair, with plush cushions that a collector would kill for. Collin definitely had not seen such a chair before.

Of course, there were other differences, but they were far too insignificant to be mentioned. What really mattered is that the soldier was getting suspicious. Collin looked over to see the soldier giving him the evil eye. 'He's definitely getting suspicious of me' Collins heart whispered fear into his mind. Sweat poured down his back as he stood at attention, fearful of angering the scary old soldier.

All of a sudden, the soldier stood up. Slowly, deliberately, he made his way over to Collin. Watching the soldier circle round the librarian's desk, Collin for the first time realised just how muscular he was. Or as they say in millennial-talk, 'the dude was ripped'. In any case, the soldier grabbed Collin's arm and began pulling him away from the desk, towards the big steel doors.

Wait... steel? Were the doors supposed to be steel? The doors were thrown open and Collin was dragged along into the scary outside world.

"Geh raus! Bibliothek ist geschlossen!" *Get out! Library is closed.* The librarian threw Collin to the ground like he was nothing. "Wait! Sir! What year is this?" Collin shouted after the librarian who was already turning back and walking towards the library.

Suddenly, the librarian turned around, and stomped over to Collin. Leaning forward, the librarian studied his face. Those jet black eyes bored holes into Collin's skull. Collin's teeth rattled like bones and his legs turned to jelly. "Ye-ye-yes sir?" he mumbled, wondering what on earth he had done to piss this old man off.

In his head, Collin prayed. He prayed to every single god he could think of, praying that the gods would save him from the wrath of the soldier. His eyes squeezed shut, Collin could only hope. But to no avail. The soldier once again grabbed him by the hem of his shirt and dragged him down the street.

'Oh god, he's definitely gonna throw me out into the trash dumps or something! He might even be dragging me to some deserted alley so he can do all sorts of horrible things to

me!’ Collin’s mind was running wild, filled with the heavy prospect of the old soldier doling out some form of punishment or torture to him. Eventually though, Collin gave up and slumped, resigning himself to his fate.

Dragged along by the gruff soldier, Collin was assaulted by the scenes of war and the ravages that time had left on the country. A woman was lying by the streets, clutching a photo frame, possibly the last remnant of her family and home. Upon seeing the soldier stride past in his uniform, she lurched forward, grabbing hold of the soldier’s uniform.

Desperately, pleadingly, she tugged his sleeve, like a young child would a parent. She spoke, in a dreadfully forlorn tone “Wann kommt er nach Hause?” even though Collin did not understand, the look in her eyes was as clear as day: why? Why did they take my husband, my sons away? Please, let them come home alive.

Looking around, Collin saw buildings that were broken and partially torn down, once brightly coloured storefronts now broken and left hanging there, held up by a single, bullet-riddled chain. The buildings were barely recognisable now. For most, only a single wall remained, for some luckier ones, two walls. Some had been completely demolished.

Along the streets, Collin saw dozens more homeless people, lined up along the streets. In the distance, a food truck, more correctly, a ration truck waited, lines of bedraggled people queueing up, ration cards in hand. As they reached the front of the line, each checkbox on the card was ticked off, and they left with meagre portions. In total, a small basket full of rations, presumably for their whole family for the rest of the week.

Surveying the scene once more from his low ground vantage point, the gears inside Collin’s head clicked. Now he realised. The swastika, the eagle’s crest, the crowds of homeless people, the broken down buildings, and most of all, the language they spoke, he was without a doubt standing in the middle of wartime Germany!

His jaw dropped. He had been transported by the book over 60 years into the past! As the realisation hit him, he felt only dread. What was going to happen to him now? Trapped in a foreign world, without a clue of what to do, the future seemed bleak.

## Chapter 3

### Headquarters

After being dragged along for a while, Collin realised that the soldier had no intention of dropping him off in some vile alleyway. Along the roads, the buildings were now getting more elaborate, and the very air started smelling expensive. Here, the houses were complete, no longer one-walled ruins, but beautiful balcony houses, with marble pillars. Windows adorned the houses, and out of those windows gazed patriotic soldiers, staring proudly at their homeland, Germany.

Right down the middle of the stretch stood one majestic building, completely white, surrounded by a grove of trees. It had a domed top, with a small, stiff spire poking out. Its marble columns stood higher than those of any other building around, and in front of it was a fountain. The whole building screamed money, power and luxury.

Soldiers lined the entrance like an honour guard as Collin was unceremoniously dragged along, his bum hitting each and every cobblestone. ‘My poor bum. It’s really going to hurt after this.’ the soldiers parted to let the librarian through. The librarian climbed up the white stone stairs, and Collin’s whole body shook with each step he hit.

The doors were steel. This time though, they were unadorned. Instead, they were plain, big gates that radiated an aura of an impregnable wall. ‘Intimidating huh...’ truth be told, Collin almost wet his pants in fear of what was going to happen to him. He stared up at the ceiling of the entrance, high, high above, and felt a strange sense of foreboding.

The librarian pushed open the doors. One part of Collin marvelled at the size of the entrance hallway, which was big enough to comfortably fit a modern airliner. Not like any existed now anyway. As the librarian dragged Collin through the maze-like hallways of the building, he started to hear snatches of conversation “Moskau”, “Bombe” and “Amerika”. Even though Collin had no idea what their harsh, guttural sounding sentences meant, they turned a corner and all was clear.

In a large foyer stood a map. Their location, “München” was clearly marked. A gunmetal grey country spanned Europe and much of North Africa, and on it was marked

“Deutschland”. With a shiver, Collin understood he was looking at a 1943 world map, but it seemed... off in some way. Was Germany this huge? He looked to the north-west of the continent, where the British Isles lay. About half was German controlled, and the other half was occupied by an entity labelled as the “British Union”.

Collin realised that London was now German. Even he, with his lacklustre knowledge of world history, knew that London was never part of the Third Reich. Was the map wrong? How did Britain fall? Collin took his attention to another part of the map, near the east. Apparently, Germany now controlled Moscow and Stalingrad, with armies pushing into the far North. The map makers couldn't have made such a major error, could they? Maybe... the map was not wrong, but... that would mean... the world was... changed. His legs gave out at the thought that the Nazis now controlled the civilised world, and the last he could see was the librarian's pockmarked face before everything was washed in black.

When Collin woke up, the first thing he noticed was a set of doors. These doors were inconspicuous, white doors, similar to those his school used for the classrooms. Behind those doors lay... chairs? Rows after rows of chairs completely filled the room, with backless sofas lining the walls. The librarian, whom Collin had come to know as ‘Herr Strauss’, had plunked Collin down on a sofa, and was nowhere to be seen.

Eh? Had he just been locked in? He rushed to door and pushed. It didn't budge. Not an inch. Collin reared back and slammed into the door once again. The same result. He began sweating now, he really was locked in! Why was he kept in here? What did they intend to do to him? His mind was racing at 100 miles an hour.

In an act of desperation, he ran back to the door. Claspng both hands on the doorknob, he wrenched it back and forth, trying to get out of the room. He strained and strained, until his face was all scrunched up like a man eating a sour candy, but the door still refused to open. Then he remembered the paperclip he kept in his pocket for when he wanted to break into the teacher's lounge for a snack, courtesy of some unknowing teacher.

Yes! It would make a great lockpick! Collin hurriedly unravelled the bent metal loops of the paperclip into a somewhat flat, thin rod. It wasn't perfect, but it would do. Rushing towards the doorknob, he shoved the hastily made lockpick into the keyhole and jiggled it

around. He felt the little teeth inside shifting and changing places. After a while, he wiped the sweat from his brow, deciding that it had been unlocked. He placed his hand on the doorknob, ready to leap out to freedom.

And then the door exploded inwards. Maybe exploded is the wrong choice of words here. What really happened was the door being pushed in from the outside by someone with such tremendous force that Collin was blown off his feet and butt first into the floor. Gazing up in shock, Collin saw the most muscular man he had ever seen. His shoulders and arms were so broadly muscular that his suit had to be handmade. No retailer would make suits in that size en masse.

Collin's eyes almost popped out of their sockets. 'So-so-so imposing' his mind was huddled in a dark corner of his brain, afraid to come out and face the man standing before him. The man took his arm and pulled him along, out of the room and down the endless corridor once again.

## Chapter 4

### The Fuhrer and initiation

They stopped in front of a large wooden door, much bigger than the other doors in the building. It was rather hard not to notice the large lacquered sign next to the door reading: Fuhrer, Herr Adolf Hitler. Hold up a second. Hitler? Collin had the slightest feeling that he had heard that name before. Well, no matter. He was going to meet this head honcho soon anyways. Perhaps seeing his face might jog his memory.

The door swung open, revealing a spacious study. A small, tidy bookshelf was pushed up against a section of the wall, political and philosophical books lined up neatly along its shelves, with Swastika bookends keeping them from falling. The lighting was a serene light, not too strong, not too weak either, that bathed the room in a warm glow. Potted plants were placed around the room, and its most salient feature was the jade bust of a moustached man.

In the middle of the room, somewhere towards the back stood a mahogany table, decorated in the way one would expect a CEO's table to be decorated. A small potted cactus brandished its needles from its place next to a large computer. The model of the computer was an old one for Collin's time, but in the time zone he was in, that computer was considered the newest and the best. Next to the computer was a towering stack of files. Collin could only make out the names of a few. Instantly, the words 'Atomic bomb' and 'Pearl Harbour' jumped out at him.

"Ahem!", a squeaky voice behind the desk barked out. The man behind the table cleared his throat, instantly drawing Collin's attention. Unsure of what to do, Collin stood at attention, with his back arched, both arms placed firmly at his sides, feet squeezed together. "Yes sir!" he exclaimed, from what he had gathered from his surroundings he was in a military base, so standing at attention and yelling "Yes Sir!" seemed to fit the description.

The man behind the table laughed. "Oh no, no need to be stiff my boy, just relax." heaving a sigh of relief, Collin did as he was told. Then it struck him. The man was speaking English! "From what I've heard from Herr Strauss, you are an English speaker, no?" Mutely, Collin nodded his head.

The man went on “you should be grateful that you ended up here, in the good graces of the ruling militia, and granted solace by the Aryan race!” the man leaned in closer, studying Collin’s face like a hawk. “Hmm... a tad young, but no matter. We can and will make use of him.” the man mused to himself.

Suddenly he turned around, threw out a hand to Collin and said “Be delighted! You shall be part of our army now! Your youth and strength shall be put to good use!” Disoriented by the rapid series of events, Collin took the man’s outstretched hand. The man shook it, and then realised something. “Ah right. I have not introduced myself yet, have I? My name is Adolf Hitler, Fuhrer of our glorious Thousand-Year Reich.”

Hitler turned back around, and motioned one of the guards forward. After whispering something to the guard, he walked back to his desk and resumed his seat. The guard took him and began pulling him out of the room, towards the open door. Just as the guard reached the doorframe, Hitler called out “My boy, you would do well to study some German. The others in your squad do not speak very good English. Oh and by the way, your name shall now be ‘Ralph’”.

Dragged out by the guard, Ralph, who we shall address as Collin to avoid confusion, found himself leaving the Reich’s headquarters behind. Not wanting his bum to get hurt any further, Collin quickly stood up. The guard said nothing and continued walking. Something about his aura warned Collin against trying to bolt.

Soon after, they arrived at a building. It was similar to each and every other building Collin had seen on his way there, apart from the big number 31 on the side of the building. The guard turned to him and pointed at the number. He was obviously not very comfortable with English, so he grunted “Remember. Yours.” Collin got the message. He was going to stay in that building, so he needed to remember the building number.

‘31... gotta remember 31...’ Collin stored his building number away in the part of his mind kept for only the important bits. “Wait! Where’s the guard?!” frantically looking around, Collin saw the guard’s heels disappear up a flight of steps. “Hey! Wait for me!” Collin called as he jogged after the guard.

Finally catching up to the guard, Collin heard the distinct “Bam! Bam!” of the guard hammering away at the door of one of the apartments. A man came out and began talking to the guard. Their conversation was in German, so Collin only caught part of it. But what he did hear roughly translated to: “His name is Ralph... He can’t speak German, English only... Teach him German”

The guard turned and plodded down the staircase, leaving Collin all alone with the man. With a bright smile on his face, the man introduced himself as Jack and clapped Collin on the shoulder. “Um, ni-nice to meet you.” Collin looked down at the floor. “Well don’t just stand there, come on in!” Jack heartily pulled Collin inside the apartment.

It was a shared apartment, with a few rooms spaced out along the corridor. Heads poked out from the doors on each side, the residents of the apartment clearly thrilled at the prospect of a rookie joining them. For Collin’s benefit, Jack clearly announced in English “This is Ralph. He will be joining us. He cannot speak German”.

Collin was given a room at the back end of the hallway. The interior was unfurnished, with only the bare necessities of a room: a bed, with a simple white bedsheet, blanket and pillow, tucked away in a corner of the room. On one wall stood a medium-sized closet, with a few clothes hangers already provided. On the ceiling was a single light bulb and in one corner of the room was a door. That door led to the toilet, which wasn’t anything special either.

Collin didn’t have anything to decorate his room with, or any personal belongings besides his clothes, for that matter. First things first, he was dirty. And tired. And sweaty. So he decided that before anything else, he needed to freshen up. Stripping buck naked, he jumped into the shower and came out feeling like a new man. With nothing else to do, a wave of exhaustion hit him, and he lay down on the bed, back in his old clothes, to take a nap.

And thus began Collin’s new life as Ralph, a soldier in the German army. The members of his squad taught him German daily and before long, he could speak German like a native. When his first pay check came in, he used to buy a few sets of new clothes. Soon, he began to feel like he belonged, and that everything was fine.

Except for the dreams.

## Chapter 5

### Dreams

#### AD 1968, London

The man awakes to chants and shouts. He's in a park, somewhere. Evergreens and oak trees stretch out, as far as the eye can see. However, his immediate attention is drawn to a crowd of people chanting, mostly youngsters, a group that people would soon come to know as "Hippies". Well, in the old world at least. They chant, sing, and laugh. "Stop the war!", "No more deaths!". Ah, war, such a familiar word. Which one though? He catches a glimpse of a banner "END THE VIETNAM WAR, BEFORE IT ENDS US". Ah, Vietnam. The Vietnam War, an integral part of history. Who could forget? A bespectacled young man catches sight of him lying on the grass, and reaches out a hand. He smiles... and the world explodes. He loses focus for a few seconds and suddenly, he is aware of soldiers swarming out of troop carriers and onto the park. A tank sits nearby, it's barrel still smoking, a swastika embossed proudly onto the turret. All over the park, rapid-fire popping sounds are heard, no louder than the bursting of a paper bag, as Nazi autocannons roar to life. He hears the words, "Sieg hei...", and the world cuts to black.

#### AD 2001, New York

The man awakens in a cubicle, head surrounded by large stacks of printer paper. He hears the sounds of pagers and landline telephones all around him, a cacophony of noise in an urban jungle. He stretches his neck, and looks up. On a nearby wall, a plaque stating "Bank von Amerika" is hung, an oasis of marble in a faceless wall of concrete. An LED signboard next to the plaque reads "8.44am, 11 September 2001". Suddenly, he feels a low rumble, a tremor snaking through the floor. His coffee mug crashes to the floor as his desk vibrates. Cursing, he stands up, grabs his nearby Siemens cell phone, and... drops it in shock. Outside his window, he can only look as a Lufthansa passenger jetliner, the iconic shape of a Heinkel He 304, screams towards the building, seemingly straight for him. Time seems to slow down. He vaguely notices his Siemens impacting the floor, its 2000 Reichsmark case cracking straight open. He watches silently as the plane grows bigger and bigger before his eyes, before it impacts the space 10 desks to his left. As a ball of fire extends outwards at the speed of sound, the last thing he notices is the swastika emblem on the plane's tail burst into a million pieces, before all goes black yet again.

## **AD 2018, New York**

The old man walked along the busy pedestrian sidewalk, deep in his thoughts. People bump into him often, harried New Yorkers rushing elsewhere. He crosses the street slowly, while waiting Volkswagens and Mercedes honk. Turning a corner, the old man somehow finds himself in Times Square, the advertising centre of the world. Electronic TV screens and billboards scream at him from every visible angle, while the skyscrapers in the background inch toward the sky. The crowd getting on his nerves, he finds a bench outside a deli and relaxes. Suddenly, he feels something deep in his bones. Something about his whole journey, about this place, this city, the world. Something very wrong. Suddenly, he simultaneously realises 3 things.

1. The news ticker reads “Reich defeats Japanese Sixth Navy in battle for Sydney, 180000 Japs killed ”
2. Hanging from every storefront is the Nazi swastika, and a Nazi banner.
3. The tourist map he holds states “New York, Greater German Reich, population 21,000,000”

With strength he never knew he had, he rushes over to a nearby newspaper stand and grabs a copy of the nearest newspaper. He could swear it looked exactly like the New York Times, but it was instead titled “The Swastika Times”. He throws a few coins at the female vendor, ignoring her muttered curses and complains. Back on the bench, he flips the papers with urgency. He scans the headlines: “Fall of Moscow anniversary celebrated in New Berlin”, “Reich sweeps 224 golds at Pyongyang Olympics”. He starts to sweat and continues flipping: “V-13s used on Japanese Empire, Yokosuka levelled”, “Aircraft carrier *Erwin Rommel* sails for Manila with Third Fleet.”

## Chapter 6

### The Mission

One day, Collin's squad received an order to assemble at the briefing room in the headquarters. In full uniform. Their apartment was in total chaos. While Collin was in his room struggling to do the buttons on his uniform, Jack was in the kitchen, scarfing down a piece of toast while trying to pull on his pants. All around the apartment, the other squad members were facing the same plight.

When they had all managed to finish donning their uniforms, they gathered in front of the apartment, grinning in excitement. This was their first mission together as a squad, and they were pumped up and ready to go. Fist bumping, slapping each other on the back, talking loudly and generally having a great time all the way down the street to the headquarters, they made their way to receive their first assignment.

Greeting them was Hitler himself, so Collin naturally assumed that this mission was a matter of great importance. And it was. The plans outlined by Hitler were so familiar to Collin, yet so alien. He definitely remembered seeing a similar topic in his history textbook back in school, and yet the whole situation was completely different.

Before the plans, a little bit about Hitler himself. He was a passionate speaker, his arms making wild, hypnotic gestures, his eyes burning with his hunger for conquest. His voice itself was mesmerising. The love, confidence, and trust he had in his speeches and his audience were all conveyed directly in a matter of minutes.

The plan itself was both ambitious and different, in the sense that from what little bits and pieces Collin could recall of his history textbook, the plan completely and utterly went against historical fact! It scared him too. The words "atomic bomb" were repeatedly mentioned throughout the hour long briefing, and the bomb was the main focus of the plan.

A little background information was first provided about the mission. A Nazi collaborator stationed in Austria had recently been keeping a close eye on the scientist Albert Einstein, and his research. For a few months already, the Nazi party had caught wind of Einstein being in the process of creating a super-weapon: the Atomic Bomb. just a day ago,

the report came in that the bomb had been finished, but when a retrieval squad went to take it, Einstein, along with the blueprints, had disappeared.

The plan was split up and condensed into two phases. The first phase was otherwise known as the location phase. In short, the objective of the first phase was to track down, locate, and make contact with Einstein. They would be aided by Nazi collaborators in Austria once they reached the border. Their biggest lead was a report stating that after observation, Einstein was found to be a supporter of the resistance: America.

That said, it was very likely that Einstein was en route to America to deliver the plans for the bomb to members of the resistance.

The second phase was crucial. The retrieval phase. A simple yet delicate matter to handle. Einstein was widely renowned, and the public would not take it lightly if something happened to him, say he was murdered for his work or forced into working for the Nazis. Therefore, it was pivotal that he be persuaded to hand over the documents to the Nazis by the least violent method possible.

Negotiation was repeatedly emphasised as the preferred method, however blackmail was still included as a last-ditch method. In the case of blackmail, it was advised to cover up all evidence of the blackmail, to prevent a public outcry.

Left with a mission that delicate, Collin's squad headed back to the apartment, their heads spinning. "So... anyone wants to be the negotiator?" Jack clearly was trying to help the group find a stable foothold to clear their minds. The others fell silent, as did Collin. "Well then, I'll negotiate." Jack threw his arms on Collin's shoulders "The time now is 8.27p.m., We'll leave at 9p.m., OK Ralph?"

## Chapter 7

### Retrieval

8.51p.m., Collin was the first to enter the lobby, ready for action. In a matter of minutes, his other squad mates entered the holding room, waiting for orders .

“It’s been confirmed. Mr Einstein is immigrating to America. Our job right now is to stop him before it leaves by plane. We will drive to the Vienna International Airport and intercept him there.” Jack stepped up and briefed the squad.

“Yes sir!” Collin’s squad resonated with agreement. At 9pm sharp they set off for Vienna.

“It’s going to be a really long ride boy, about 10 hours. I suggest you grab some sleep, Ralph.”

But Collin could barely hear what Jack was saying, as he was already slowly drifting to oblivion. The bumpy ride on the road felt like a head massage, and in a matter of seconds he was out cold.

*2nd September 1955, 10 years after the bloody Second World War ended. The day was marked as Germany’s National Day and Collin was marching as one of the soldiers in the midst of a Nuremberg rally. Marching down the city with the army, packed like sardines, the army stopped in front of a platform where Hitler stood, proud and almighty. Behind the platform, there was a giant statue covered in cloth.*

*“ Today marks the 10th anniversary of the end of World War II. It has been more than 21 years since my rise to Fuhrer and we have done nothing but rise to glory among ashes and dirt! We avenged the humiliation we suffered in the First World War and have successfully conquered the entire world with the Axis Alliance! To mark this special day, I’m revealing this statue which was beautifully sculpted by a team of Japanese sculptors. Happy National Day, and Sieg Heil!”*

*Chants of “Sieg Heil” and “Heil Hitler” reverberated across the crowd as the cloth was pulled down. There they stood, the three leaders of the Axis powers: Benito Mussolini of Italy, Emperor Hirohito of Japan and of course, Hitler himself.*

*“ The Axis were destined to be victorious  
We were meant to rise and be glorious.  
Oh, Great Hitler won the slaves in Moscow  
And in the Far East there was Hirohito*

*Who ended the Great Second War with a blast  
Dropping two bombs on filthy America.  
First the Little Boy in the Big Apple  
Then the Fat Man in Los Angeles...*

*Wait, what the hell, Collin thought. That can't be true, weren't the Americans the ones who bombed Japan? As the crowd chanted louder, Collin started having a splitting headache and suddenly all he wanted to do is to get out of the rally as soon as possible...*

“Rise and shine, boy!” Collin was snapped back to reality with Jack shaking his shoulder roughly. Groaning, Collin got up and checked the time. 5.58am, a ball of red light emerged from the horizon and embrace Collin with warm morning sunshine. It was truly a breath-taking sight.

“Alright men,” Jack broke Collin’s reverie. “Our collaborator Schluss is already at the airstrip and he will stop Einstein from boarding his plane. We’ll reach the airport in about 10 minutes, and we’ll intercept him there.”

At the airport, they were greeted at the airstrip by a weedy man in a black overcoat. He introduced himself as Schluss, the Nazi collaborator who was tailing Einstein. “I am terribly sorry, I lost him due to my own incompetence. If this information could be of any help, I last saw him at Schönbrunn Palace!”

Schönbrunn Palace? What a weird place to be for someone trying to escape to America! Collin glanced over at Jack, who nodded. He was obviously thinking along the same lines. “No matter. We will investigate the palace.” As expected of Jack! He knew how to logically analyse every situation!

And off to the palace they went. For absolutely nothing. They found absolutely no new leads, and instead found out that they had been betrayed by the man who called himself ‘Schluss’! And then it hit Collin. Schluss had frizzy, white hair! He WAS Albert Einstein!

Luckily for them, only an hour or so had passed since they landed in the airfield. Jack looked down at the file on Albert Einstein, and recognised the frizzy white hair. “Damn it! Schluss was Einstein!” he yelled into the walkie-talkie “Shut down all the airfields! Now!” They jumped into the truck and raced down the Austrian roads, back to the airfield.

The squad caught Einstein just as he was about to board the plane. “Back so early? And why the order to shut down the airfields?” “You know very well why, Herr Schluss, or should I say Herr Albert Einstein.” Jack continued “Out with the blueprints and nobody gets hurt.”

Einstein chuckled a low, sad chuckle. “Ha, I would rather die than pass these documents to you. Who knows what your lovely Fuhrer would do with these papers. It’s my duty to ensure that this briefcase does not fall to the wrong hands, so don’t stop me from passing this to the Americans.”

Collin stepped up and blurted out, “ Uhm, what makes you think that the Americans are not the wrong hands?”

Einstein looked at Collin and smirked. “You know nothing, little boy, you really know nothing. You wasted more than 10 years of your life having your mind twisted by a disgusting warmongering dictator. You and your bloody war turned the world upside down for more than 5 years. The world will never fall to your hands, filthy Nazis!”

“Not going to cooperate are you?” Jack fished out a folder containing details on Einstein’s family, of whatever that is left of it. Attached to it by a paperclip was a photograph of Einstein’s two sons, tied up in a cell. “Still not going to cooperate?”

Einstein’s eyes widened like a schoolboy getting betrayed by his friend to a teacher for the first time. He looked down at the briefcase in his hand and sighed a deep, long sigh. Then he held out the briefcase. “Here. Please don’t hurt them. They’re innocent.” Jack took the briefcase and quickly rifled through it to ensure that the contents were real.

Satisfied, he closed the briefcase and spoke into the walkie-talkie. “We got the blueprints.”

## Epilogue

The squad stood once again in front of Hitler in the briefing room, this time holding a briefcase full of notes. Collin did the honours of passing Hitler the briefcase, then they waited with bated breath as he opened it. “Clack. Clack” the latches of the briefcase clicked open and the men could not stop themselves from leaning forward to look at what lay inside.

They were disappointed. What they saw was a few pages scribbled over in mathematical garbage, completely unintelligible to them. What Hitler saw, however, was different. Looking down at the pages, he smiled a knowing smile and nodded to the men. “Well done.”

Collin’s fist had almost met Jack’s in a fistbump when the doors flew open. A soldier ran in, panting. “Fuhrer, sir! Something weird is going on at the library! One of the books, we checked, it was not mentioned in the archives, it started glowing, sir!”

“Which book? What was its title?”

“A complete history of the crucibles of mankind, sir. It was in English!”

Collin bolted for the door. That was the book! It was the very same book that brought him here, to wartime Germany! But why? Why was it glowing? These thoughts sailed through Collin’s head as he ran, down the elaborate luxury of the soldiers’ apartments, down the ragtag streets of the refugee district, towards the big doors of the library.

Swinging open the doors, Collin’s body went into overdrive. It was like his body was leading him back to the book, back to where he came from. Finding the book, he opened it and felt the familiar warm glow, and the world went black again.

When he woke up, the first thing he saw was the female school librarian’s familiar face. Until he noticed what she was wearing. A Nazi uniform? He shot to his feet. Was he still in Germany?

He ran for the door. No, he definitely was not in Germany. The door was the door his school's library had. His thoughts went to his classroom. They should still be recognisable, right? Still his classmates?

Down the corridor, to the left, last class. The steps he took were those he took to school every day, and yet why did he feel so scared. Heart in his mouth, he opened the classroom doors.

...And he almost fainted. Each and every one of his classmates looked the same. Same faces, same hair, same size. But they all wore Nazi uniforms. The projector and the facilities hadn't changed, but the classroom was filled floor-to-ceiling in Nazi propaganda. And then there was his teacher.

That big, burly man DEFINITELY was not Mrs Petosa. Definitely.

Mrs Petosa would never wear an army beret. Mrs Petosa would never wear boots. Mrs Petosa would never wear an army jacket. And most importantly, Mrs Petosa hated symbols. Especially Nazi swastikas.

“Oh no! My teacher's a Nazi!”