Anna Boghiguian

*Dive into the Dark Dive Box*

She danced and danced and lost her head.

The mob broke through the doors.

“BREAD! BREAD!”

“We are starved, the earth is barren, food is scarce.”

“I am not the Austrian who said eat brioche if you don’t have bread, I am the one who escaped to my husband’s bedroom.”

“The Bastille has fallen, so have you,” the masses shouted.

“BREAD! BREAD!”

La Fayette, head of the national guard, had the key to the Bastille; he had fought alongside George Washington in the United States War of Independence. “The head should go for liberty to exist,” George Washington asserted.

“We fought for our human rights,” George said.

“We are fighting for our democracy,” the French said, “Equality, liberty, and fraternity.”

The royals were driven to Les Tuileries.

Constitutional monarchy, the third estate gets power, the nobility lose their power.

The ones who had money were the clergy and the bourgeoisie.

Hans Axel von Fersen helped to plan for the king and his family to escape. They were caught a few miles away from their destination; at the last checkpoint they were stopped and returned.

The Queen of France changed the axis of the world political order, involuntarily.

From the revolt of the bourgeoisie and clergy, democracy was born in France.

Equality, fraternity, and liberty. These concepts were for all French citizens.

The head of the ruler had to go.

After Louis XVI was caught trying to escape, he was retuned as a traitor to Paris. Bloodshed and riots came to the streets of the city. Some demanded that the king be spared and returned as a constitutional monarch; others decided upon his death.

Louis XVI did not know how to rule, but he learned the skills of a locksmith.

Robespierre decided the king should be guillotined on January 21, 1793.

Louis XVI insisted: “I am innocent!”

Drums played, a carriage was ordered, and the king went up to be beheaded.

The mob cheered, the drums played “Vive La Liberté.”

The head was shown to the mob with pride. Some still loved their king.

She wept a widow’s tears, mingling with the sea’s waves.

Dressed in black, she runs her hands over the black fringes of the sun.

The heat melts away her sorrow, but what next?

As he fell

darkness fell

Obscurity

A widow is heard behind the curtain

The wind blows a new song

Equality is . . .

Robespierre, as well as the members of the Reign of Terror, tried Marie Antoinette, and on October 16, 1793, she was taken to the guillotine.

David drew her in a white gown with her hair cut haphazardly; she has on a peasant’s hat.

With the most elegant gait, which no one else had, Marie Antoinette walked with dignity to the guillotine.

“Excuse me for stepping on your toes,” she said to the soldier who had the rope in his hands.

The mob hailed: “Fraternity, equality, and freedom!”

Her daughter cried for the loss of her parents. She was orphaned and wept endlessly; they let her go free. Nobody knows what happened to the child.

Today, at La Place de la Révolution, now called Place de la Concorde, stands an obelisk from the time of Ramses II. It was gifted from Egypt to France in 1831 in recognition of the achievements of Jean-François Champollion, who had decrypted the hieroglyphics. Not far away, there’s a merry-go-round, a reminder of the turning wheel of life.

Almost one hundred years after the French Revolution, the people of France sent the Statue of Liberty to New York as a token of their support and friendship for the people of the United States. The Statue of Liberty was sculpted by Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi in 1886.

The French Revolution changed and inspired the world in many ways. Leon Trotsky was a Marxist who was impressed by the French Revolution and by the concept of *egalité* (equality). Especially the equality that François Noël Babeuf spoke of—the distribution of wealth among all. Babeuf was considered one of the first communists in Europe and guillotined in 1797.

Trotsky’s 1905 revolution failed, he was taken prisoner and sentenced to life in prison in the Arctic. He managed to escape with a false passport and gold coins in his boots; when all the prisoners were about to board for their last train journey, he had acted so convincingly that he was thought to be sick, and was admitted to hospital. After a few days, he said he felt better; as he was leaving, he saw a cart of frozen hay being pulled by reindeer and hid in it, while his friend pointed the police in the wrong direction. He escaped with the hay and the reindeer. When the snow melted he was wet, and he went to sit next to the driver. He arrived in Saint Petersburg from the Urals. From there he traveled to Finland to meet his wife. Eventually, he reached Vienna, “Good old Vienna!” he said. He became the editor of *Pravda*, and Lenin sent to him a Georgian who looked like a peasant—it was Stalin, asking how popular Marxism was with the Viennese, how nationalistic the city was, with its coffee houses and intellectual life, and whether a lot of different concepts were discussed and exchanged among intellectuals. Besides Trotsky, several other important thinkers lived in Vienna, among them Sigmund Freud, and painters like Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele. Bertha von Suttner, a journalist, pacifist, and anti-war activist, wrote the novel *Die Waffen nieder!* (Lay Down Your Arms!). In 1905, she received the Nobel Peace Prize. She organized a peace conference in Vienna in 1914, but died before it took place. A friend of Theodor Herzl, the father of Zionism, who wrote that Jews needed a homeland, Bertha felt that war was possible, and she had a great desire to prevent it.

Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian emperor, was waiting to take his seat on the throne; meanwhile his favorite pastime was deer hunting—he bragged that he had killed more than 5,000 deer. On June 28, 1914, he was killed by a Serbian activist. Gavrilo Princip was eating a ham sandwich when he spotted the archduke; he threw away his half-eaten sandwich and shot Sophie and then her husband, Franz Ferdinand.

The Great War was declared. Millions died, countries and cities were burned and destroyed, because of his assassination. Who knows, maybe the half-eaten ham sandwich was made from the flesh of one of the animals the archduke had killed. Was it the vengeance of nature? The same day that Ferdinand was killed, on June 28, 1914, a boy was born in Austria, while his twin brother died: Aribert Ferdinand Heim, who became one of the most vicious SS men in the Austrian concentration camps, nicknamed “Dr. Death” and the “Butcher of Mauthausen.” Bertha von Suttner had died of cancer a few weeks before Franz Ferdinand’s assassination.

Upon the declaration of war by Germany, Hitler collected his papers, canvas, and other art materials and joined the army. He intended to paint during his spare time. The Great War, which later was named World War I, ended with the Treaty of Versailles. Hitler received the Iron Cross decoration for his services. As the war broke out, the art world saw changes: Marcel Duchamp moved to New York City in 1915. Egon Schiele, who had scandalized society with his expressionist paintings, died of Spanish flu. Hugo Ball, with his concepts of Dadaism, created Cabaret Voltaire. The surrealist movement, as well as expressionism—although that existed before World War I—took a more central position in the world of culture. Lenin lived in Zurich on the same street as Cabaret Voltaire and may have been affected by Dadaist performances, unforgettable events that showed a new way to look at life and art. How far he was involved is questionable, but he left there to travel to Russia to organize the Russian Revolution.

Calling his revolution one of PEACE, LAND, AND BREAD, he won over the masses; the 1905 revolution moved on to 1917. Leo Tolstoy had already prepared the serfs for a change, a revolution. The Bolsheviks refused to fight with the capitalists, so Russia withdrew from the World War to create their own prosperity, land, and bread. In 1922, the country became the USSR. The revolutionaries were Trotsky, Lenin, and Stalin. The head was Lenin and, when he died, in the ensuing struggle the peasant with the thick moustache grabbed power and took over the USSR. Trotsky no longer had a position in the Politburo, and they exiled him to Kazakhstan in 1929. From there he moved to Istanbul, Turkey.

Trotsky was invited to France, but to stay in small towns, guarded by police. He agreed to go to Norway, but the Norwegians were worse, keeping him under house arrest with no outside contact. He finally went to Mexico and was offered hospitality by Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo. He had an affair with Frida Kahlo and an argument with Diego Rivera, and moved to a house in the Coyoacán neighborhood of Mexico City. When André Breton went to Mexico he socialized with Trotsky, and in 1938 they wrote a text, the “Manifesto: Towards a Free Revolutionary Art.” It was published under the names of Bréton and Rivera. In 1940, Trotsky was assassinated by Ramón Mercader, who had become engaged to Trotsky’s secretary and infiltrated his circle with a false name. He attacked him with an ice axe while he was feeding his rabbits.

After World War I, Europe was afraid of communism, especially the industrialists, factory owners, and tycoons. They supported extreme right parties because of their fear of communism. At Versailles, the Versailles Treaty glorified the beauty and splendor of the Hall of Mirrors. The French and the British were the stars of the meeting; the USA was recuperating from Spanish flu. Italy did not get much attention; Germany was punished; and France demanded astronomical sums as compensation for damages caused by the war. Italy linked arms with Germany. They became partners or allies. Nazism and fascism. Mussolini was a journalist who admired Nietzsche, but his interpretations were based on fascism. In the end, Nietzsche’s sister, Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche, took over the archives of her brother and reinterpreted his *Ecce Homo* and other writings, disregarding notes or explanations written by her brother. Elizabeth was pro-Nazi and befriended many Nazi officers, including Hitler.

The concept of anti-Semitism was rising. Ideas of the superiority of the Aryan blood. Tests were given and family names were researched to find the origins of citizens; were they Jewish or Aryan, that was the question. As anti-Semitism became a political point of focus, the SS captains at the German concentration camps gassed the prisoners. Men like Adolf Eichmann and Josef Mengele were committing atrocities. In most cases, the SS doctors punished the Jews more than the other prisoners. There was one doctor, named Aribert Heim, who killed in order to own a skull. According to witnesses, he murdered countless people by lethal injections to their hearts. He had a stopwatch to time their deaths.

Hitler was once a house painter and made architectural drawings that were turned into postcards for tourists. He managed to get the attention of people by giving speeches on sidewalks that attracted the masses, about German debts and the superiority of their fatherland. As he was considered unimaginative, he had been rejected by the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Hitler became a German citizen in 1932 and chancellor in 1933, a great unexpected success, but still he was obsessed with art and his rejection by the Academy. He designed the swastika, an icon of spiritual significance in Hinduism, as the symbol of his party, and invited all the Nazi members to a meeting where they could decide the party emblem. Many proposed different designs. He chose the swastika. Hitler had the gift of being a convincing oracle; he took over the gestures, the articulations of opera singers and actors. He rehearsed how to behave before the public in front of a mirror. He loved Wagner’s music and operas, so he took over until he became a part of the opera and the music.

Once in power, he decided how art should be, and not be. Expressionistic art, among many other forms of art, was classified as degenerate: works by Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, Oskar Kokoschka, Max Beckmann, George Grosz, or Emil Nolde. Hitler collected 16,000 paintings and organized an exhibition in Munich on degenerate art, which ran from July to November 1937. It was made especially to mock art that was outside his realm of understanding or imagination. He strutted and joked in front of the works. The walls were covered with graffiti; it was said, “The vision of these artists was polluted by the Bolsheviks and Jews.” Hitler tried to cleanse the world of pollution supposedly created by Jews. What was acceptable was the pure Aryan art, like his art.

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner became depressed with the situation. In 1938 he committed suicide. George Grosz decided it was not necessary to be in Germany. He migrated to New York City with his family, where he taught at the Art Students League and changed his way of painting. Piet Mondrian moved out of Paris with the help of his friend, the sculptor Barbara Hepworth. He migrated to London; Barbara found him a studio next to hers. In 1940, he left for New York and fell in love with the city, its jazz world, Broadway boogie-woogie; color entered his paintings. In 1938, in Vienna, the daughter of Sigmund Freud was walking down the street when she was picked up by the Gestapo; fortunately she was not charged and they let her go. Immediately, Freud and his family left for London. Stefan Zweig, who had written the biography of Marie Antoinette, as well as the most famous book on the Habsburg family, fled his country to London, from there to New York, and finally to São Paulo, Brazil. The face of Europe was getting worse. Stefan Zweig, with his wife Lotte, committed suicide.

André Breton, who wrote the “Manifesto of Surrealism” and other texts in relation to surrealism and the surrealist revolution, had his writings banned by the Vichy government, but managed to escape to New York with the help of an American friend. On a trip to Mexico, Breton met with Trotsky. It was the year of Trotsky’s assassination. In 1945, driven by his interests in Haitian customs, magic and politics—his curiosity about the revolution of Haitian slaves against their slave masters—the Frenchman went to the island. During the French Revolution, France had lost almost all of its colonies. The Haitian slaves rose against their owners and were granted independence. Later, after the Haitian Revolution, Charles X, the brother of Louis XVI, forced Haiti to pay 150 million gold francs in reparations to French ex-slaveholders—ten times as much as the Rothschilds paid the French for Louisiana. The sum was to be paid off over a long period of time. Breton revived surrealism in America by organizing exhibitions and writings on surrealism. When the war ended, He returned to France in 1946.

Hitler continued his war. Destruction was everywhere and the concentration camps were full of Jews, those unfit for work, disabled people, homosexuals, as well as the elderly. Hitler was at the top of the pyramidal power structure, the dictator; the SS officers around him followed his orders to the end. If the SS officers did not obey they were punished, but if they had all refused to obey it would have been Hitler’s end. On May 10, 1941, Hitler’s secretary, Rudolf Hess, traveled to Scotland on his own initiative, in order to attempt to arrange a peace treaty with Britain. His enterprise failed and Hess was imprisoned as a Nazi; he died in prison, committing suicide in the late 1980s. Hitler and his mistress Eva Braun committed suicide in April 1945.

Upon defeat, many Nazis escaped to South America with fake passports bearing false names. Aribert Heim was always on the verge of being caught: when they came to the front door, he had already left by the back door. At first his name was not on the list of Mauthausen SS officers. Later, when he became suspicious that indeed people were following him and questioning him informally, he went to Fritz Steinacker, a lawyer who took care of Nazis and their difficulties by managing to suppress the history of their actions.

Aribert lived in Baden-Baden; he was married to a wealthy doctor and they both practiced medicine. Right after the war, he opened his own gynecological clinic. They had two sons, at that time aged six and twelve, but his marriage was falling apart; he was not sharing a room with his wife. She suspected him of having a secret, an affair. To secure himself financially, Heim bought a building in the Moabit neighborhood of Berlin, and engaged Wilhelm Droste Real Estate as the manager.

One day it all changed; Aribert Heim, whose whereabouts nobody knew, was wanted as a Nazi criminal. Before he escaped, he asked Wilhelm Droste to pay the monies collected from the Tile-Wardenberg-Straße 28 building to his sister, Herta. He managed to successfully escape Baden-Baden at 4:30 in the morning. Shortly after, the police came to look for him. His wife, who was anti-Nazi, pledged she didn’t know of her husband’s actions or involvement with the Nazi’s Mauthausen concentration camp. It was the first time that his son Rüdiger used the codename “Gretel” for Aribert. He spun fairytales modeled on the Brothers Grimm in his letters to inform his father about what was happening.

Heim ended up in Cairo and lived off monies sent to him from Switzerland by Herta. The house in Moabit, with thirty-four units, gave Heim—which translates into English as house or home—enough money to live on and to invest in other properties in Egypt: a hotel in Cairo, a flat in Alexandria, and a piece of land on Agami Beach. It was not legal in Cairo for a foreigner to own property, so he found an Egyptian, Nagy Khafagy, who stood in for him. Heim lived in a small room in the hotel he partly owned, in an area where no foreigners lived—Hotel Karnak at Ataba Square, not far from the Tiring Building, opposite the Cairo post office and fire department. A very busy section of town, once the center of Cairo’s commercial district. The Ezbekiah Gardens were opposite the Karnak Hotel and the Cairo Opera House a block away.

From his room he could watch the hustle and bustle of the city, with millions of people walking around. Noise, music, Qoran chanting—all mixed together—was Cairo’s atmosphere. Heim loved to take photographs, but he did not want to be photographed. It is not known what he did with the thousands of photographs he took. He learned to speak Arabic and was fluent. He wrote articles on anti-Semitism, signed “Ibrahim,” which he would send to people here and there: newspapers and acquaintances. He related to very few people and spent most of his time in his small, dingy hotel room, reading. The Azbakeya district is still well known for its second-hand booksellers; Heim could probably browse and buy as many books as he wanted to read during the long, hot, summer days.

I suppose people have difficulty in accepting their errors, they prefer to either project them onto others, or claim their innocence. Aribert was such a person. He swore again and again that he was innocent, that he did not commit these crimes. He had a German passport and an Egyptian driving license with the name Ferdinand Heim. Khafagy was renewing his residency and sorting out his problems; Herta would bring him money—as usual she was helpful, arranging the import of a Peugeot taxi cab for Khafagy from Germany for all the favors he was doing for her brother.

Tile-Wardenberg-Straße 28 in Moabit was in an ordinary neighborhood. Alfred Aedtner, a criminal investigator, began to take an interest in Heim’s house; he checked into the rental income and looked up who was responsible for the building. He located Wilhelm Droste Real Estate and learned that it was Herta who collected all the rent monies—without paying taxes. Tax officials asked Aribert’s sister to prove that she was sending the rents to her brother or to pay 10,000 deutsche marks. She said she did not have the money and called Steinacker, her brother’s lawyer. Given that her brother was a fugitive in hiding, he could hardly fly back to Germany and affirm his identity. The family took great precautions to avoid divulging his location. Steinacker said he would get the necessary documents sorted out to prove that it was Aribert Heim who received the money. Steinacker brought paper, pen, and a recorder to Cairo for one day, flying Lufthansa return. Aribert met him in Cairo and signed the paper, and Steinacker recorded his voice to prove Aribert was alive. The lawyer returned to Germany and now the police wanted to know Heim’s whereabouts. Steinacker insisted it was his duty under his professional oath not to disclose the secrets of his client. From there, the police took the letter to be analyzed: its texture, paper, glue, etc. They discovered it was ordinary glue on ordinary paper from the US or from anywhere in Europe, as was the ink. However, *Der Spiegel* wrote a very long article on Aribert Heim, now at the top of the most-wanted list, along with Josef Mengele.

The tenants of the house on Tile-Wardenberg-Straße were horrified that their money was securing a living for a Nazi in hiding. They decided the solution would be to put their money in a bank account that he could not touch. Droste played innocent, saying that they could not investigate every time someone came in with a proposal—besides, Aribert Heim was very polite and very well mannered.

The anti-Nazi demonstrations continued, demanding the house be sequestrated; after a year of discussion, the tax people requested that the house be sold. By the time it went to auction it had gone up three times in price. The tax authority wanted 510,000 marks, but the house brought in 1.71 million, so after the tax was paid, 1.2 million was frozen in Aribert’s bank account.

Hansel and Gretel went to the forest, his son Rüdiger wrote to him; life will be tight.

After contemplation, Heim moved to Moski, to the hotel Qasr El Madina, in a room on the sixth floor. He was known as a pious Muslim, who worshipped at the corner mosque at every prayer time. In 1981, his friend Abdel Moneim Rifai, a dentist, took him to al-Azhar Mosque, the major mosque in Cairo, and he converted to Islam. He changed his name to Tarek Hussein Farid and Aribert Heim disappeared from all formalities. Bank, documentary, or other.

Rifai was a relatively close friend—he was his dentist, as teeth were an obsession with Aribert. Rifai in many ways suspected the man whom he considered to be a friend was hiding a deep secret, as he was unapproachable. It was not known who he really was, but it was assumed he had been married and had a wife and children. When it surfaced that he was a former Nazi criminal, after his death, Rifai was shocked.

The whole relationship, and even his piousness and conversion to Islam, is questionable, and an answer to this mysterious man does not exist. No one can be certain that he lived for thirty years in Cairo without traveling elsewhere, that his murderous anti-Semitic nature ceased in 1945. His hotels are located where there were Jews; specifically, Moski was a neighborhood where once Armenian, Greek, and Jewish merchants had their shops, even though between the mid-1950s and the end of the 1960s most, if not all, had left the neighborhood and the city. If someone could kill in the way Heim killed, it went beyond orders from his country—he became a Nazi before Austria was annexed to Germany, when it was still illegal to be part of Hitler’s party—it was rooted in his deep hatred toward humanity, especially Semites. Aribert was born and educated Christian, his concept of anti-Semitism started with his education; he read the Bible, and felt if there were no Semites there would be no need for anti and he would not be guilty. He had sworn to Herta that he was innocent, and she had decided that he was.

In a letter to his sister, Heim wrote that it was difficult for him to survive in Cairo because, with the revolution of the officers in 1952, the European structure of the country was falling apart. He felt alien, and specifically did not want to socialize with other Europeans. In difficult times, Khafagy got Heim his share of money from the Karnak hotel. He didn’t build the great hotel he originally wanted to build on his land in Agami. He may have spent summers in his Alexandria apartment; there is a photograph of him on the beach in swimming trunks. His social life revolved around the Doma family, who owned the Hotel Kasr el-Medina, translated as the palace of the city. He played ping-pong with the children, and he built a tennis court on the terrace of the hotel. Today, neither Kasr el-Medina nor the Hotel Karnak exists. But the son of the Doma family, Mahmoud Doma, who was brought up in New York, wrote an article where he tells that this kind foreigner, Uncle Tarek, was like a father to him.

How did the secret of Tarek Hussein Farid surface? His suitcase was left behind by Rüdiger, who allegedly was with his father when he died of colon cancer. Although Aribert Heim, an Austrian of German nationality, was registered as dead, the German embassy never suspected that he could be “Dr. Death.” It is strange that no one questioned why such a man was living in such a neighborhood, the behavior of someone who is in hiding. Rüdiger left Cairo without arranging his father’s funeral. Doma, the hotel owner, could not complete the burial papers as he was not a relative. It is assumed he is buried in a cemetery for paupers and homeless people, but that is not conclusive.

A suitcase covered in dust bears witness that Aribert Heim was in Cairo, but did he really die on the tenth of August 1992, or was this another alibi to enable him to disappear and reappear on another continent?