

Did LSD kill JFK?

SHIFT

Leary's Little Secret

bonus chapter

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~~SECRET
EYES ONLY~~

SHIFT

A NOVEL

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First Edition



Leary's Little Secret

bonus chapter

The doctor was trying to find a pair of underpants.

He'd been wearing nothing but a tie when the agent's knock woke him. Had slipped a pencil-striped buttondown over it to answer the door, then pulled on two socks (one dark, one light, both on the left foot) while Morgenthau explained that his presence was needed in the remote building that, despite its official designation as a coach house, the Castalians preferred to call the gingerbread cottage.

A pair of trousers straddled the back of a chair like a boy riding the top rung of a fence. Before the doctor could put them on, however, he had to find underpants. That was the rule. His mother had taught him when he was two years old. So he was bent over, his shirttails riding up and exposing the pale, golden-haired globes of his buttocks while his right hand poked and prodded the clothes on the floor like a heron hunting fish. For some reason it was necessary to stand on one leg like a heron as well. Or a flamingo. Did herons stand on one leg, or just flamingos? Did flamingos hunt fish for that matter, or just gather in ostentatious crowds in the center of Hialeah? The one-legged approach slowed the doctor's search, but it gave the underpants less advance notice of his presence. Both feet would send ripples of disturbance through the layer of clothing—*well, obviously*—giving his skivvies ample time to scurry away.

And besides, herons were blue and flamingos were pink, so it was perfectly clear which one *he* was.

He sifted through the litter but it was difficult to concentrate. There was the heavy weight of Morgenthau's eyes for one thing, also the snores of the woman on the bed, who had promised to kill anyone who made the mistake of waking her before noon. Oh, and the 250 micrograms of LSD he'd taken after dinner, washed down with tea made from some kind of mushroom Dick had brought back from his last trip to the Village (along with a case of rectal gonorrhea, poor man). That probably had something to do with it too. The LSD, not the gonorrhea. The LSD and the mushrooms. The doctor wasn't sure what time it



was—he had an idea it was thirty-seven o'clock, but a niggling, hide-bound aspect of his brain told him there was something wrong with this theory. At any rate he was pretty sure he was still feeling the effects of the acid, because all the objects in the room seemed to have lost their color. Not as if they'd misplaced it as sometimes happens—*Oh, I've lost my yellow!*—but as if some sentient fog that survived by leeching the reds and greens and blues from the world had passed through while he lay sleeping, leaving everything parched, black-and-white, desertish. What was the word he wanted? Lunar, that was it! The bedroom looked like a moonscape.

Of course, that could've just been the fact that it was illuminated only by moonlight. Two bars as cold as Corinthian marble slanted through the tall windows, illuminating a monochromatic carpet of clothing that stretched to all four corners of the floor: jackets, pants, shirts, coats and shoes and undergarments; also empty bottles, crusty dishes, water-pipes, lighters, and innumerable baggies, their transparent skins scummed with the residue of hashish or hemp oil or tuna salad; and then finally dozens of books, all folded open like thick, two-petaled flowers. In the thin light the hard objects looked as malleable as the soft, as if the fog that had stolen their color had stolen their substance as well; and over this Dali-meets-de Chirico landscape rose the rectangular escarpment of the bed, its sheet coiled caduceuslike around the supple curves of its sleeping occupant.

Something about this sight aroused the doctor—possibly the woman's right breast, whose dark nipple pointed at the ceiling like the tip of a volcano, or the fingers of her right hand, which flitted across the folds of her pubis as though they were the pages of a closed book. Sighing heavily, the doctor reached between the wrinkled tails of his shirt, past penis and testes (both slightly damp, c.f., the woman on the bed), and pressed his index finger against his perineum. The sleeping woman had revealed to him the erogenous possibilities of this part of his anatomy earlier in the evening. It was like a button, she told him, like a little pump. Pressing it caused the the penis to fill with blood, and continuing to press it—

“If you wouldn't mind sparing me the blue show, doctor?”

The doctor started. He'd completely forgotten about the silhouette in the doorway. The agent. Morganthau. That probably wasn't an ac-



cident. Freud said there were no accidents, didn't he? Only deliberate omissions perpetrated by the unconscious because the conscious mind is too afraid to violate the rules that govern our day-to-day existence. Freud was a sex-obsessed idiot, but Morgenthau still scared the shit out of the doctor. His foot tapped the lintel impatiently, and it seemed to the doctor that the light leaking up the stairs squealed each time the sole of his wingtip crushed it to the floor.

Funny he should use the term *blue show* though, when there was no blue in the room. No color at all. The color had been eaten by the fog. Or drank? Would you call that action drinking, or eating? The doctor decided to make a note and ask Dick tomorrow. Terminology, after all, was crucial to their enterprise. *Psychedelic. Acid. Trip.* How much better these words were than *hallucinogenic* or *lysergic acid diethylamide* or *chemically-induced altered state of consciousness*. *Castalia* as opposed to *Millbrook*. A new world required new names, and those names would color how other people saw it.

Color. There it was again. This was definitely worth writing down. There were certain aspects of the psychedelic experience that couldn't be processed by the straight mind—like, say, the bit about standing on one leg, which would've never occurred to him sober—but other things needed to be recorded so they could be examined more rationally at a later time. That was why everyone who came to Castalia was given a notebook as soon as he or she arrived. The doctor himself used a clipboard. It was partly a vestige of his former life, when he still made grand rounds, and partly a way to invest himself with the teensy weeniest amount of authority. In this place, where titles and rank dropped away like clothing, the clipboard was practically a scepter of power.

He abandoned the search for his underpants (among other things, he'd put his second foot down at some point, so his drawers were no doubt long gone), pulled his shirttails down as low as they would go, and picked his way toward the doorway. His clipboard hung from its sacrosanct nail just inside the doorframe, a Bic tied to it by a shoelace. Conscious of Morgenthau's eyes on him, the doctor jotted down his note. *Fog color drinking?* he wrote. *Eating? In my brain underpants.* A second question occurred to him. *Gonorrhea rectum? Better ask Mom.* Because Morgenthau was looking at him, he used a private script he invented on the spot, an irregular series of loopy-loops like the spine



of a spiral notebook after all the pages have been ripped away. He flashed the clipboard at the agent—just let him try to read that!—then clapped a hand to his head in a parody of a salute.

“Lead on, Agent Morgenthau!”

“Timothy,” came a weary voice from the bed, “if you don’t get the *fuck* out of here, I will cut your balls off and use them to gag you.”

The doctor winked at Morgenthau, as if to say: wouldn’t *she* be surprised when she did that, to discover he wasn’t wearing any underpants?

On the other hand, it could’ve just been a twitch.

•

Hundreds of almost-empty glasses lined the wide staircase, through which a narrow path meandered like a mountain brook. Morgenthau’s heavy footsteps rattled them dangerously as he descended the treads, sending up a sticky-sweet cloud of alcoholic fumes abuzz with flies and fairies. In the vast living room, a half dozen bodies were strewn on, under, and around couches and chairs and carpets. One blissed-out bohemian lay stretched on the long trestle table with various glasses and candlesticks and religious tomes crowded around him (leading the doctor to wonder if the sleeper had climbed over them to get to his berth, or if the other occupants of the room had placed them there after he was already ensconced). The sleeper had covered his face with a cloth napkin on which the first hexagram of the *I-Ching*—creativity in its purest and most powerful expression—had been drawn in six rainbow-colored lines. The doctor took the fact that he could see all six colors as a sign he was coming down, although why they were blinking like a neon sign was anyone’s guess.

He gazed at the snorkeling forms. At least half the people hadn’t been here at the beginning of the week. They were growing all the time, his little band of colonists, drawn here in flashes of intuition and inspiration like lightning to a rod spiking from a church steeple. And for every one of them here, there were ten or a hundred or a thousand out in the world, turning on to the new layers of consciousness that an ever-growing assortment of psychedelic drugs was revealing to the world. The doctor envisioned these new levels of mentation like an enormous reservoir of water pooling behind a giant dam—like, say, the dam the Russians had recently begun building for the Egyptians on the



upper reaches of the Nile. The world's longest river, and, in historical terms, the oldest. For thousands of years it had served its population. The annual flood deposited silt along its banks, making it possible for the Egyptians to grow their famed cotton and wheat, while the water itself provided transport, both for people and for the enormous slabs of stone the pharaohs' engineers floated down its surface to build the pyramids. Now in the twinkling of an eye its offering was being augmented to an almost unimaginable degree. It was estimated that the dam, when completed, would double the energy output of the entire nation. Whole towns, lit previously by candles or gas, would suddenly burst into light. To the doctor, the new drugs were transforming the brain on a similar magnitude. The sleepy current of human consciousness was being amplified into a raging torrent as it sluiced through the turbine of the psychedelic experience, and soon the whole world would be turned on to—

The doctor pulled up short. The thought of turbines had nudged something in his brain. Water. Rushing. Breathing. *Breathing?* Ah yes. That was it. Not snorkeling. *Snoring.*

Heh.

Meanwhile Morganthau strode ahead, as oblivious to the doctor's musings as he was to the sleepers around him. He seemed deliberately to make as much noise as possible—stiff leather soles clomping on the parquet, fingers jingling the change in his pockets, breath whooshing from his mouth like water through the aforementioned turbines. Even from the back you could tell he was pure Company Man. The pristine crease that went up the back of his trousers, as if he never sat down to rest or shit or gaze up at the stars. The boxy jacket, cut wide at shoulders, waist, and hips to conceal any hint of anatomical curve. Over it all the broad-brimmed hat pulled low to cover the head—the brain, the mind—and conceal the eyes. This was not a person. Not a body. This was a suit. A suit with a mouth. A mouth that didn't ingest but only barked: orders, complaints, sarcastic asides. *If you wouldn't mind sparing me the blue show, Doctor?*

But, Company Man or no, he was also the liaison between the doctor and the people whose money and connections made all of this possible—the sleepers, and the room they slept in, and the chemicals that coursed sweetly through their veins—and so the doctor hurried after



him, being careful to place his feet in the agent's steps in order to cancel out the man's presence in the room. Fortunately the agent left glowing red footprints behind him, so it was easy to know where to step. Toward the end, however, the agent's stride grew longer: three feet, five feet, a dozen, till he was leaping across the the room like the monkey god Hanuman jumping through the heavens. The doctor leapt from hillock to hillock, mountaintop to mountaintop, from the Berkshires to the Catskills to the Alleghenies, from the Rockies to the Sierra Nevada and across the Pacific Ocean to the Kunlun and the Hindu Kush and the great Himalayas, where Everest itself towered snow-capped and cloud-shrouded over the world.

So intent was the doctor on not slipping off the sheer slopes that he didn't realize the dark silhouette ahead of him had stopped to pull open the front door, and he crashed into its back. Morganthau spun around, his right hand reaching reflexively inside the left panel of his jacket. But then he saw it was just the doctor, and, scowling with distaste, he stepped back and motioned him through the door.

The doctor regarded the portal. All he could see was a bottomless darkness swirling with razor-sharp snow crystals blown about by a howling gale. He shook his head and smiled, as if to say, You can't fool me *that* easily.

"Oh no, after you." Let *him* plunge a thousand feet over the precipice.

Rolling his eyes (the doctor could see this despite the hat's shadow because the pupils were emitting a green glow), Morganthua stepped outside. Floorboards materialized beneath his feet, then the rest of the large covered veranda that stretched the length of the house. In another moment the Himalayan vista had disappeared, and the doctor could see acres of lawn gleaming silver in the moonlight. Laughing a little, he stepped outside. The cold air of a New England summer night was bracing, not to mention the dew-slicked floorboards beneath his one bare foot and the novel sensation of damp air moving around his genitals. Sobriety settled on his head like a hat, only slightly askew. A shame a pair of pants didn't come with it.

Morganthau was stamping his foot on the porch just as he had outside the door to the doctor's bedroom. His deeply dimpled chin, less Rock Hudson than Rock Quarry, the *Flinstones* version of America's



most eligible bachelor, protruded from the shadow of his hatbrim, a Puritanical frown pulling down the corners of his thin-lipped mouth.

The doctor shrugged at the eyeless face.

“Aftershock.” The doctor waved a hand back at the living room they’d just passed through. “You and I just circumnavigated half the globe.”

Morganthau’s upper lip twitched. “By definition, Doctor, circumnavigation requires a complete revolution. ‘Half the globe’ is simply a very long trip.”

The doctor’s eyes twinkled. “You can say that again.”

Morganthau seemed about to make some peeved rejoinder, then broke off. He fluttered his hands in the direction of the doctor’s waist. “Dr. Leary, please. If you would kindly adjust your, ah, *shirt*.”

The doctor looked down and saw that the tails of his shirt had parted around his penis like a waterfall around a rock (although, on closer inspection, he realized the protuberance was actually the bottom of his tie, but he decided against pointing this out). Chuckling slightly, he pulled his shirt closed and fastened the bottom button, then hurried off after Morganthau, who had already descended the stairs and turned toward the right. He walked quickly, as if more comfortable having the doctor’s genitalia behind him, and soon they’d rounded the northeast corner of the Big House and were heading toward the thick stand of pines that crowded the back of the building, and which sheltered—the doctor suddenly remembered why the agent had roused him in the first place—the coach house. I.e., the gamekeeper’s cottage.

“Has something happened?” he called after Morganthau.

“In a manner of speaking,” Morganthau said without turning around. “I have someone I think you should meet. He’s in the cottage.”

The doctor skipped and slipped over the damp grass after Morganthau. He expected him to say somethin about the man in the cottage, but the agent just walked silently around the corner of the house. When the pine forest came into view he pulled up slightly. Leary could almost feel his trepidation at the sight of the shadowed wall of trees, their silver trunks all but invisible in the blackness. Almost shared it himself. Then, visibly squaring his shoulders, the agent marched forward. The doctor heard him take a deep breath. Then:



“Mr. Luce and his compadres have, in their inimitable manner, referred to the nineteen hundreds as the American Century.”

Leary did his best to process this random statement, but he was distracted by the back-and-forth flapping of his genitals against his thighs. His left foot was soaked through, the pair of socks starting to flap off his toes like a flaccid...well, like a flaccid.

“There are those of us who think in grander terms,” Morgenthau was saying. “It’s 1963, Dr. Leary. We have passed the halfway point of the ‘American Century.’ We are, in fact, less than forty years away from a new millennium, and there are some people who would like to see the year 2000 as the beginning of the American millennium. But such a dream requires more than foolish experiments with hallucinogenic chemicals. More than a shift in policy or diplomacy. It requires truly visionary thinking and, when necessary, a capacity to make and execute the difficult decisions. To strike preemptively, when the the enemy is ill-suited to return to fire. To set aside certain niceties of of the democratic process for the sake of the greater good—the good to generations not yet born, as opposed to those now scurrying over the face of the earth.”

The doctor understood now. Morgenthau was justifying himself. He had done something wrong. A part of him wondered if the man in the cottage was alive or dead.

“But instead of being a part of these grand plans I find myself dealing with a man who does not even realize he has neglected to put trousers on, or, for that matter, underpants.”

The doctor chuckled. “For the record, Agent Morgenthau, I am aware that I am not wearing any pants. I am aware, for that matter, that I am not wearing any underpants. It’s quite chilly this evening.”

“Dr. Leary—”

“I have to say, Agent Morgenthau, the last man I heard speak of a ‘thousand-year reign’ was Adolf Hitler. I find it chilling—terrifying, not to mention morally reprehensible—that a man who believes that one nation might possibly have evolved a way of life that would serve the whole of humanity for a period that amounts to more than half of recorded history should be overseeing a project that might well have such an impact on the future of the species.”

Morgenthau snorted. “Are you really comparing me to Adolf Hitler?”



The doctor considered his answer for a long time.

“I suppose I am. I was going to say that of course I wasn’t. That of course Nazi philosophies so far outweighed yours in depravity that there could be no comparison. But, though I choose to believe that the spirit of freedom is still present in this country, I have to admit that any man who believes in the existence of a philosophy that could serve mankind for a millennium, let alone a man who claims to know what that philosophy is, is a man so alienated from what it is to be human that, yes, I do believe he exists on a continuum with the Führer.”

Apparently unprepared for such a reasoned, or at any rate semantically comprehensible, response, Morganthau was silent, and after another few steps, the doctor continued.

“You will probably be surprised to learn that I applied for and was accepted into West Point. You will probably not be surprised to learn that I resigned my commission before graduating. However, I did serve my country during the Second World War as a staff psychologist. I worked with hundreds of soldiers, many of whom had been physically scarred, all of whom were emotionally devastated. I asked myself what they had suffered for, what countless others had died for—and so soon after the Great War. The War to End All Wars, and yet, less than a quarter century later, we had embarked on another, even greater effort at global annihilation. I too am motivated by service, Agent Morganthau. By the desire to help my country and my fellow man. It just so happens that we have chosen different ways of doing that.”

They were well in the forest now. The overhead branches blocked out most of the moonlight, and the two men had to keep their eyes on the ground to avoid tripping.

“I liked you better when you were jumping around and raving,” Morganthau said.

“Well, I’m still pantsless. And if it makes you feel better, I’m saying all of this to a green-scaled lizard with a Marcel Duchamp mustache and wearing a Magritte bowler hat.”

For the first time the agent cracked a smile. “Really?”

The doctor laughed. “Actually, no. You have a bit of a silvery glow, but that’s all.”

“That’s funny. You’re glowing a little bit—oh, Jesus.” Morganthau suddenly started running. His slick-soled shoes stumbled over half-



submerged roots, but he continued charging forward. Grabbing his penis and testicles to keep them from flopping around, the doctor ran after him.

“What is it, Agent Morgenthau?”

“Do you keep any LSD in the cottage?”

“For research purposes only,” Leary panted. “A trip can be...quite different...when you share it with...someone else.”

“I think they found it.”

“They? There’s more than one?”

“Chandler is the one I want you to meet. Naz is the, ah, delivery agent.”

“Now is not the time to be coy, Agent Morgenthau. Who is this man, and why did you bring him to me?”

Just then a group of six or seven deer started up almost directly in front of Morgenthau and the doctor. Both men jumped backwards, and the deer ran in the opposite way—i.e., in the direction the two men had been running. Suddenly the deer pulled up short. Dirt flew from their hooves as they wheeled around and charged straight at Morgenthau and the doctor. No, not at them. *Past* them. One streaked by so close that Leary could have reached out and touched it if he’d wanted to. The earth vibrated with the speed of their passage, and the sound of crashing was audible long after they’d disappeared into the shadows.

For a moment the two men just stood there staring after the invisible deer.

“That was...strange,” the doctor said finally.

“Indeed.” Morgenthau’s voice was unnaturally hushed. Hushed, and full of fear.

“My specialty is human psychology, not animal,” the doctor said, “but I’m tempted to say that there’s something in the forest that scared them even more than we do.”

“You asked me who I’m bring you to see, Dr. Leary.” The agent turned his glowing face to the doctor’s. “I bringing you to see the thing that scared the deer.”



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