

## Chapter 1: The Hundred-Round Fight

*Tijuana, Mexico, May 6, 1888.*

Ida

**T**hank you, Mrs. Foltz, for allowing me to describe what happened that day. However, because of the phantom nature of my thoughts, I cannot vouch for the authenticity of what I experienced. Your daughter, Bertha May, appears pleasant enough. She squints a bit when she writes, so you may want to have her vision examined. You have guaranteed that what I tell you will not be given to the newspapers or to other press sources. This testimony of mine is for legal purposes only. I understand. Your job as the defense attorney is to gather testimony of eyewitnesses to this murder. My testimony is being used by the prosecution as well? I see. There were four of us who saw this murder being committed? Can you tell me the others' names? We shall surely meet if we are called into court. In fact, I probably already know them. Believe it or not, I am quite the society gadfly, despite the nature of my occupation.

Josephine Marcus? Of course. I do know her very well. We have self-same interests, although she never likes to admit her past experiences in my line of endeavor. I understand. Sadie's common law husband, Wyatt Earp, is your client, the accused. I did not realize Sadie was there, actually, because I was under the influence at the time. Mr. Elias Baldwin? Lucky! I also know him. He gambles quite a bit, and he has visited my cottage upon several occasions. I understand he knows Wyatt quite well, as they are both investing in our real estate boom. I do recall seeing him on the night of the big boxing event in Tijuana. It was before I took the drug. He had purchased one of my lovely escorts, Marie, for the evening. Did either of these two know Mr. Sonenschein, the victim? I am so sorry. I have a very inquisitive nature, as you shall see. Who is the third fellow witness? You? You must be in jest. I see. You were there reporting the event for your newspaper. That is quite understandable. Why did I not see you, I wonder? You were where? Up in a tree overlooking the arena? You also had a box camera? Quite ingenious. I can understand that. There were many other journalists trying to get photographs, and you decided to take to the trees like our monkey relatives! We women must be especially daring to compete, do we not? Of course, I shall continue my narrative now.

I must stipulate at the outset that much of what I shall describe to you shall be of an internal variety. It is the nature of mescaline, the hallucinogenic ingredient contained in the peyote cactus, to give the user a way to appreciate the common interdependence of living beings and not their antagonisms, which are usually caused by the ones in control of the social rules and obligations.

On that day, my vision, both externally at the scene around me, and internally, at the comparisons I was making in my mind, was acutely attentive due to my ingesting the cactus buttons, peyote. My self-importance and cultural identities began to melt from my body. I became a cyclops, and my all-consuming spiritual power made me see things around me as if I were the microscopic lens of that part of me, which is connected to you all, and my attention was held rapt simply by my being close to the object in my purview.

If you have already placed me in a negative category of your mind, I understand. I warrant that not many in my profession of harlotry have vocabularies as advanced as my own, and not many have studied books in the library as frequently as I have. When you are born without papers, orphaned by the mother who gave you life, you begin to experience the reality of living inside the world of poverty. The vow you make to yourself is that you will never experience such mental

depravity and physical squalor again, if you can prevent it. The first escape route I saw was to be able to mimic the grand community leaders who would visit Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Mission Orphanage on Fifth Avenue. A large vocabulary was at the top of my list.

The male benefactors, many of whom would gaze down at us girls, had glittering, pale-colored eyes darting in their sockets. Their eyes were like Mrs. Ortega's, when she would read to us about Little Red Riding Hood's grandmother in bed. "Oh, Grandmother. What big eyes you have! exclaimed Red."

Even though these men had wolfish eyes, I eventually learned how they spoke, and what they found important, so I could convince them to pay attention to me. I was no longer simply in the genus of orphan and species of female human, required to gather around their legs like a reverent doll, a prayer of thanks on my lips, ready to bow and curtsy for their favors. I was Ida Bailey, the little red-haired riding hood pursuing the wolf. I wanted to avenge my literary grandmother, whom I envisioned was held captive inside their full bellies.

My imaginary grandmother, as I knew her, had no hereditary lineage to trap one inside a traditional family way of life. As I viewed these outdated kinds of women, they were raised to become subservient and fashionable powder puffs out in society. However, at home, they were kept as a functional ovulating machine, ready to procreate at the whim of their lord and master. They kept the home free of dirt, grime, and grit, tending to the daily chores of "mother," which was a job invented by men to trap their women inside a dangerous wheel of torture and pain, with little or no time for what these women really desired.

My grandmother was billions of years old, who had, as in Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, evolved from the same tribes of monkeys and apes that first appeared in this magnificent Garden of Earthly Delights. More than that. My grandmother taught me I was born from the stars above, as were all of us, and the only power I needed was from the sun. I looked around me at this world I was inhabiting, and I knew I had come from a time and a place that knew no boundaries or restrictions imposed from the outside. My origins allowed complete freedom on the inside. The memories which were poured into one's brain by the institutions were not the source of real knowledge. Real understanding takes place after the human mind has been freed from all interference caused by the selfish social realm into which one is born. The power from the stars is enough to allow the unconstrained mind to channel the full radiance of true freedom.

From the women's magazines, in the San Diego Library's reference section, I was learning which dress to drape upon my developing body, and what words to speak to woo the male stargazers. I knew my glow of freed intelligence must appear alluring to these tall men who wielded so much power. They had candies and coins in their pockets. They could whistle and sing, play harmonicas, and even dance jigs! They, who smelled of European linen and the best cologne, smoked long cigars from Cuba, and drank bottled water from artesian wells. They owned the key to the door of Our Lady of Guadalupe and to my personal salvation.

I was, in my post as Madam of the Canary Cottage, Horatia, the female version of Hamlet's best friend. Instead of dying in a tragic duel, I won, by teaching Hamlet how to dance with his father's ghost instead of fearing him and going murderously mad. I taught these important men how to truly enjoy us, their women of leisure. We, who catered to their every fantasy, their every carnal desire, were the same women who laughed and pointed at the passing lines of Suffragettes on Broadway, demonstrating for equality, not understanding that it was not an equal that men desired but a reflector of their own greatness.

They knew their wives were pliant and submissive, creating a concern over family matters. I and my ladies, in counter response, became fussy about *them*. We learned to dress in opera

gowns, smoke from long Parisian cigarette holders, drink champagne from our corsets, dance on velvet red table cloths, our bodies revolving under the spinning, multi-colored overhead chandelier. The band played *Dreamland*: “Down upon the silent waters, floating on the crystal stream ...” as we danced for our breakfasts, lunches, and dinners, at the best restaurants in town.

Riding in private black carriages, the windows tinted black, these important men pulled up to my Canary Cottage, or, depending on their intoxication, to other San Diego Stingaree houses of ill repute. Except our Canary fantasy dreamland gave us access to their bodies and their minds, and this is where the fun really begins, isn't it, ladies and gentlemen? According to my Fairy Grandmother, who was living inside these wolfish men, who had devoured her long ago, I am billions of years in the making. I can channel pure energy, so what I say and do break the boundaries of time and space. A completely free mind is the direct source of eternal light, whose waves of flowing atoms transform into physical shapes, on the way toward the first stimuli of infinitesimal life forms.

The men who came to my Canary Cottage knew I provided what they needed to fulfill themselves as real men. To be completely forthcoming, I also provided “special real men” to some of these real men. And, yes, this is still the Wild West, as the Penny Press likes to call it, and we cater to any fancy. Women seeking women. Men seeking men. I stop at children and at animals. Why? Not because of the Bible or other holy text. I stop because, since ancient times, children and animals have been protected from outside harm. Until recently, in our part of the world, if you stole a person's horse, you could be put to death. And children, according to the Romantics, have come from the angelic spheres, so their innocence must be kept intact until their minds can determine a personal identity.

Our young children, and the animals they imitate in games, pantomimes, and stories, should never be used for any carnal or capital purpose. True. This is not the rule the world over, as different habits and customs can become completely unique inside each of our brains. The grave mistake, I know, comes about when these thoughts become laws, and the corrupt group's adherents grow in number, and loyalty to cultural values and laws eventually controls their minds. The society establishes the rules, and they are repeated every day, in the schools, in the bedrooms, in the boardrooms, until these rules are second nature. Dr. Freud of Austria, according to Rabbi Sonenschein, calls it the “unconscious,” deep inside the brain. The unconscious rules the conscious, and is many times greater, as it is a repository for all the billions of sensory impressions we receive every day. Whereas, if each brain could remain pure and free from these societal pressures, then the pure love energy of intelligent purpose might become our collective salvation because it obliterates these strict rules of convention and replaces it with Eros, sensual freedom.

I believe it is this love energy of intelligent purpose that keeps me yearning for each day to begin again. Perhaps men like Secretary and Chief Special Agent of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice ... What was that you said, Mrs. Foltz? And Post Office Inspector? Quite right. The fact is, men do not simply enjoy largesse in their affairs, including their status titles, they also enjoy women who can feed them their fantasies of lust one delicious tidbit at a time, one exhilarating moment at a time. These men want an unlimited expansion of the senses. My women and I are what I like to term “Traps for young men” and their unconscious cravings. For, you see, my ideas for creating my Canary Cottage came from the pages of this little book, with the same title, written by Sodom and Gomorrah's Postal Inspector, Archangel from Heaven, and dry goods salesman on Earth, Mr. Anthony Comstock.

As you know, Attorney Foltz, I am only one of your four eyewitnesses. I am also probably the least valuable to your investigation. As we have discussed at length, on the day and location

of the murder in Tijuana, wherein we have now returned, I was under the influence of the two Peyote buttons which symbolize, to me, my ancient Grandmother's eyes. This means that when I did my belly dance what I saw was streaming directly from the pure energy of our Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer, the *Ein Sof*.

What I shall describe will not be understood by normal readers educated in the prison schools of American society. Although, perhaps a few might be able to puncture the veil of my symbolism. As some readers of Mr. Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* know so well, the phantom Alice inside the mirror is also a part of the human Alice standing in front of the mirror. As I will demonstrate, Alice merely needs to believe in her own magical ideas in order to step through the mirror to make them real. Even though the magical world of uniqueness makes your surroundings strange, the ultimate freedom it gives you is worth the temporary maladjustments.

After I read Mr. Comstock's book, what I saw were not chapters filled with "thou shall nots." Instead, I created my own version of "thou shall," from my Fairy Grandmother's imagination. These ideas were certainly not coming from my old life, as I was seen by most San Diego citizens as a poverty-stricken maiden, who, except for the transient beauty and impetuous nature of a wild red vixen, was condemned forever to struggle within a menial existence.

Of course, that was until I read about Mr. Comstock. This gentleman protector of virtue, my Walrus Prophet, and his little book of "shall nots," gave me the very personal pattern I needed to seek my vein of golden providence in California. The fact that he was also witness to this murder is neither here nor there. Having read about Mr. Wyatt Earp's "Hundred-Round Fight" in your newspaper, *The San Diego Daily Bee*, Mr. Comstock was here to entrap me and my clients in one of his clever artifices. I am certain he will have his own tale to impart, so I shall not muddy the waters of your investigation with my own prejudices against the man. You must be aware that he does figure into my description of what I witnessed. You, as a journalist and lawyer, must surely understand the impossibility of being completely unbiased when using fickle symbols such as words. It is your job to put together these different viewpoints in order to arrive at the truth, is it not?

Grand Jury, you say? I understand. These are upstanding members of our San Diego community who are charged with determining whether there are enough tangible evidence and unbiased witnesses presented to bring an accused to trial for First Degree Murder. No, I am not familiar with the role of a witness. There has been only one murder committed in my place of business, and I was not in the room when it occurred. Yes, the murderess was the wife of one of my clients, who came searching for her husband one evening at the behest of her four children. That was *her* excuse, of course. I, as the proprietress of the Canary Cottage, do not ask my clients about their personal and familial relations. Why should I? I create a fantasy world, like Alice's Wonderland. In fact, I inform each of my employees, whether man or woman, that he or she is charged with granting wishes that make each client the happiest. These clients come to us because they cannot, for one private reason or another, fulfill these wishes elsewhere in society.

I see. You have your own experience with brothels. Miss Ah Toy in San Francisco. You represented her as an attorney? I know this is neither the time nor place, but I would certainly enjoy speaking privately with you about your experiences. Perhaps at a later date? Very well. I shall continue.

I realize another lie. There were five witnesses to this murder instead of four, as you told me previously. Oh. I can now see more deeply. It was, you believe, Mr. Comstock's secret fantasy that set-in motion the events leading to the murder of the Jewish Mystic, and itinerant, Jerome Sonenschein. He is why there became five witnesses. The fifth witness, however, is an

antagonist of at least one of the other eye witnesses. How many more tentacles of negative energy were there between these linchpins of justice and their societal prey, you ask? These are the heady questions only you can answer, Mrs. Foltz. Call you Clara? Very well, I shall.

What I observed that night was a phantasmagorical vision. I did not know I was seeing someone being murdered. To me, as you will soon realize, as did I, the evening was divided in two halves. The first half, when I came to the party before the main event, what Wyatt Earp had billed as the "100-round Fight," I was checking on my four girls and one young man, who were contracted to work that night as escorts for privileged clients. They first saw my employees when I took my Canary Cottage bandwagon out for a spin down Broadway, along the business mile of banks, saloons, restaurants, and hotels.

The men knew my business plan. Each woman and one man wore a different color: red, green, blue, yellow, and brown. The first client to bring a poker chip of that color to me at the Canary Cottage could take my employee to the big extravaganza across the border into Mexico. Yes, Clara, I was also part of the main attraction, and this was how I came to make the acquaintance of the victim, Rabbi Jerome Sonenschein. He was the immigrant who journeyed from Brody, in the Ukraine, where his people were being persecuted by Austrians, on one side of their border, and Russians on the other. His city had lost its status as a tax-free commercial hub, in 1879, and was being taxed. Not only that, the Rabbi told me, upon our first meeting, but his own Jewish brethren, who made up eighty-eight percent of Brody's population, had turned against his Kabbalah teachings and marked him as a "blasphemer and idolater." They believed his strange teachings had turned the Russians and Austrians against them.

The rabbi came to New York City by boat, not a penny to his name. From there, he joined a caravan of settlers traveling to California, and he settled in San Diego, after roaming for weeks with a contingent of Mormons, who were sympathetic to his plight, and who thought of themselves as one of the "lost tribes of Israel." When he heard that some also practiced polygamy, he believed he had indeed discovered a long-lost tribe of brethren.

I spent the spring studying with Rabbi Sonenschein. I remember because my ladies had ventured up into the Anza-Borrego desert to harvest wild flowers for our cottage. Come to think of it, rabbi called my workers and I human wild flowers, and the rains that were so necessary to the desert blossoms' growth applied to us as well in the form of real estate storm's excesses. These land speculators and builders were our best clients, as they were to all of San Diego, yet we in the flesh and spirit trade had to capture their viscera before we could allow them to use our outsides for their pleasures.

Yes, I'm coming to that. Rabbi Sonenschein explained to me that his religion was based on his ability to see through the seven veils which cover us from the Divine Light, the *Ein Sof*. He always wore the same suit, an old black frock, similar to those worn by priests in the missions. But on the surface of this long frock, and also etched upon the round *kippah* on his head, were hundreds of letters and numbers of many languages, fonts and sizes. When I asked him what they were, he went into what I was later to learn was his deepest meditative unconsciousness. His lips moved under his black beard and riveting, yet staring raven eyes. I am able to hear his words any night when I'm alone, and the sounds of the nocturnal carnal escapades have finally disappeared. There is only me and his words, whispering, the letters taking form, dancing in the light of the window where the stars poured in their luminescence.

"Behind the seventh veil of the world's illusion lies a direct connection with the infinite mind of our Creator. My coat is an attempt to capture the name of this Creator in symbolic form to allow us to contemplate it and to realize it. This is possible if one has lost consciousness

completely and can follow this Creator's instructions down to the last detail."

I am an intelligent young woman, Clara. I must admit, however, that I had no inkling as to what this mystic was telling me. What of these seven veils? I knew of Salomé, the Jewess stepdaughter of Herod Antipas, and her stepmother Herodias. Salomé's mother was Mariamne, the daughter of Simon, the Jewish high priest. Herodias took offence when John the Baptist, the prophet, said she was disobeying God's law. She had married her husband Philip's brother, Herod Antipas, while Philip was still alive. Herod, on his birthday, wanted to see Salomé dance her specialty number wearing the seven veils.

Each veil, in its seductive order, was removed by her, as she swirled and leaped in front of the campfire to please the king and his entourage of nobles. When I told the rabbi about this, he laughed. He said behind her last veil was the Truth of the Divine Light. It was not carnal pleasure, as many philosophers believed, and it was not some passage into the hell of temptation, lust, and murder. For, as we know, the biblical Salomé had promised her mother the head from John the Baptist, who had insulted her marriage to the king. Herodias convinced Salomé to tell her husband she would dance for him at his palace revelry. In return, the king must cut the head from the false prophet John's shoulders and bring it to Herodias.

Now, I shall enumerate the explanation he gave me, which eventually evolved into the horrendous murder of the rabbi in Mexico. Many artists and philosophers of the Enlightenment were sympathetic to the dancer, Salomé. Herodias was an evil witch to force this impressionable and artistic young woman into doing what she did. Salomé was completely innocent, and her stepmother was to blame.

But then, in our present Romantic Era, the same assortment of literary and philosophical experts changed their minds. It was the time when each person was believed to have a unique and completely free will. Therefore, the Jewess could have refused her mother. She could have been courageous and stood up to her insulted parent. Instead, Salomé disobeyed her moral compass, which was controlled by Jewish law, and she danced a most wickedly vile and magical enchantment that cost John the Baptist his head.

At this moment, the rabbi grabbed me by my shoulders so abruptly that my head wobbled. His black pupils were slightly enlarged but were riveted in a concentrated stare into my own windows of the soul. He explained the symbolism of each veil Salomé used in her dance, as it corresponded to his doctrine of finding what he called "The Zohar," the Divine Light of the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of this mystical realm. He said this dominion became illuminated once this final cataract veil was lifted from our eyes.

His words are also marked upon my brain as the Ten Commandments were marked upon the stone tablets by Yahweh, the unnameable. I shall always remember them. Especially now that the rabbi is dead. Before I began my dance that night here in Mexico, before I took my drug, Rabbi Sonenschein explained my purpose.

He told me the first veil I must cast off allowed the meditators upon my body to begin to work in the wisdom of internality, which is sweeter than honey and nectar, opens the eyes, and revives the soul. It allows you to find a hidden delight, sweet as the light to the eyes, and good for the soul, refining and illuminating your brain with good and upright qualities, tasting the flavor of the hidden Light of the next world in this world through the wisdom of *The Zohar*.

The second veil that I must loosen from around my undulating form, and allow to drift away on the evening's breeze, allowed viewers to feel the light and the future reward within their bodies. Their flesh would begin to tingle, their loins begin to moisten, and their brains would become infused with my brain. Their faces would come alive with new radiance and with an

appreciation of all that was around them was infinite.

My third veil would be difficult. It must remain around my body the longest, clinging with static energy that seems to be welded to me in a most diabolical manner. I will curse and spit upon it, and still it clings, like the first man who raped me in the orphanage, his orange body hair shaking particles of some secret earth mineral upon my nakedness. He had been digging for his fortune deep inside a hellish mine. Once I am able to repel the third veil, it will disintegrate, with a flash of lightning, and the viewers will be able to view the false façades worn by all humans in this dark world of trickery, shadows, and light. Their insight into character and mental cruelties will be rejuvenating and will satisfy their urge to become omniscient and yet they will still cling to the passions of this life. There were three more veils to destroy before the ultimate goal was attained, he reminded me.

The rabbi's voice now sounds raspy in my mind. For it is not me, nor is it my subconscious brain which now remembers his instructions. No, it is his voice and his brain, even from the land of Sheol, of Forgetfulness and Death, which make me confess to you once more.

I was ordered by him to dance into the fourth realm in a circular spiral towards the infinite Seventh Seal veil, in the white-hot center core of my being. He said I would suddenly hear a female voice from outside my meditative cocoon. Are you not aware, voice, that female-loving men, when shown photographs of women, of similar beauty, will always select the ones whose pupils have been enlarged by mydriasis drugs? Such as mescaline. This was what I used in my own dance that night, voice. Voice? You are Clara Foltz, the attorney? Oh, there you are, and your lovely daughter, Bertha May.

The fourth veil I would cast off gave the audience a vision of the magnitude of the Creator's Dominion. Planetary solar systems would fill the sky in their minds. It was a moving, rolling tapestry that never stopped whirling, pulsing outward and then pulling inward once more. Expanding and constricting, spiraling galaxies, streaking comets, and exploding stars. To my audience, my legs would be seen moving beneath my final three veils. I was that vision of loveliness conditioned by billions of my sisters of the past, who, over the millennia, had learned to harness nature's neurological Eden to give dancers like me power over these hunter males.

Rabbi Sonenschein, the mystic, told me the gender of the dancer and watcher means nothing. Male watching female. Male watching male. Female watching male. Female watching female. It was the symbolism of what was behind these veils that was important, not the lust the dance might provoke in the heat of the moment. Although lust *was* a part of my appeal, at the beginning, he explained that the purpose of my dance was to transfix and reveal a deeper meaning to them. Men were usually much larger, much more conditioned by pain and their chosen role as tribal protectors. The continuing passage of infinite galactic possibilities, caused by shedding the fourth veil, will make my mouth water from thirst. I will know I still had to continue to dance for three more rounds, and my body will begin to sweat, the beads forming on the surface of my arms, legs, and torso like droplets on desert sands.

The fifth veil, he said, would create a frozen moment in time and space. Each of my observers would be able to fantasize whatever it was made them happiest. It was as if the prospect of reaching the seventh veil made a fissure which created a dream within the mind that was not controlled by one's chronological age. Instead, the reality of seeing this thin, red piece of silk brush against my skin for the last time was a passageway to a moment of existential joy beyond the usual pain and suffering of the world's dramas. He said, if I watched them carefully, I would be able to notice a smile on each of their faces. It might be caused by a childhood toy, or the first kiss during a spring shower. No matter what the moment was, it would suspend the viewer in a

wonderful rapture. After I cast it aside, the person who caught this veil would be able to have the first wish he or she made come true.

I understand, Clara. That is a good description of what I was experiencing. I felt like I was in *A Thousand and One Arabian Nights*. Now that a murder has been committed, I wish I could go back in time and tell the rabbi I could not dance for him. Wait one moment. I don't remember. Did Shahrazad survive her ordeal of telling stories to the king? Yes? Thank you, little miss. I suppose there is hope for me yet.

I am not speaking too quickly for you to copy, am I, Bertha May? Does your mother employ you in her business quite often? You once pretended to be mad inside the Stockton State Insane Asylum? How exciting for you! I hope you won your case. I see. This story of mine is also becoming quite extended. Only two more veils, and then I can tell you what happened after I took the mescaline.

I know as I reach the final veil, the reality of what happened while I was dancing was not in the realm of sensory perception. That is why I am attempting to explain the meaning of each according to the victim. When I tell you what I saw when I was hallucinating under the control of the drug, you will be able to compare and contrast these details with what your other witnesses experienced. I must emphasize the fact that it was my choice to take mescaline and not Rabbi Sonenschein's. The fifth veil diverged most from what he told me would happen.

I understand your analogy very well, Clara. Finding the truth is quite like peeling the layers from an onion. I shall now explain what I saw from the perspective of my state of hallucination while dancing to reveal the fifth, sixth and seventh veils. I understand. The rabbi was shot during the reveal of the seventh veil, and I was also quite naked. Can you now understand why I believe my testimony may not be valuable to you? I was in the center of the onion, which, of course, has no center. Be prepared to set your sacred Suffrage Movement back at least two thousand years.

Now I begin.

## Chapter 2: Vagabonds

*Tijuana, Mexico, May 6, 1888.*

Sadie

I understand. I cannot testify for or against Wyatt. You plan to interview each of us, right here, where it all happened? The mayor foots the bill, you say? Will Hunsaker is paying for our transportation? I know him. He was District Attorney before he became mayor last year. He ran as the Workingmen's Party candidate. Why did you speak for this party? Ah, because they support suffrage? Good for you! You know, the mayor represented Wyatt in Tombstone, when he was the U. S. Marshal. He and Mr. Fitch, I believe that to be his name, represented my husband on a few cases, including the *other* murder trial. Yes, the OK Corral shooting against the Clanton gang. You know, they were never shot inside the corral. That's a myth. Honey—that's what I



call him--was the Tombstone lawyer out there. He showed us around San Diego when we arrived last year. He now has three lovely daughters and a strapping son with his wife, Florence.

This is your daughter? What's your name, darlin'? Bertha May is a strong woman's name. Wyatt is always calling me Sadie, but I hate it. He gets a wicked grin, under that seagull mustache of his, whenever he calls me Sadie. He knows my name is Sarah, and I'm a Jew. You can call me Josie, or Aunt Josie, if you prefer. Do you prefer Bertha or May? All right. Bertha *and* May it shall be! Your mama must be very proud of you being able to take shorthand for her, Bertha May. I never learned a clerical trade myself. I always wanted to be an actress or a singer. I traveled out to the Arizona Territory with the Pauline Markham Theater troupe. After the cad Johnny Behan left me, to chase renegade Apaches, I met Wyatt, and my singing and dancing career was over. After we left Tombstone, we caught the gold and silver fever, and we haven't stopped yet. I suppose you could call Wyatt and me a couple of wayward vagabonds.

All right, Mrs. Foltz, I shall tell you what events presaged this murder. I presume you've already obtained information from Wyatt. I have lived with a law man for many years now, and I have also been closely acquainted with attorneys. Thus, I understand how your minds work, and I shall endeavor to explain to you in a manner that you can use to explore possible theories which might exonerate Wyatt from this predicament. I know full well you cannot use my testimony, or me, on the stand, but you can certainly avail yourself of what I have to say now.

Oh, why thank you! No, I have never attended college. However, I do enjoy reading and listening to many of my learned acquaintances. My father always taught me that the most developed intelligence is what one can experience with the senses and not from just books. The great artists succeed most grandly when they are able to learn from life through trial and error. Born artists are too rare. Most are hued from life like totem spirits. Each person must discover his or her meaning alone, but experiences with others are of primal importance.

I have always given life the risk it deserves. You can take a chance on love, or on friendship, but you cannot live to the innermost fulfillment unless you explode with curiosity. An inquisitive mind combined with a passion for risk evolves into a higher being. I believe that. That's also what my father taught me. My family did not attend *shul* in San Francisco. My father was my only rabbi, and he took his role very seriously. I was his only daughter, and I almost broke his heart when I left to go down to the Arizona territories.

I understand. I shall return to the reason we're here. I believe the good Rabbi Shonenschein was murdered because he discovered an unspeakable secret and was condemned to die. Secret? Yes, this secret is from beyond, and yet it's right here, and it has the same vibration which powers the cosmic physical reality all around us.

Correct. Exactly the way Ida would describe it. She was the rabbi's lover and student. Did you know? Oh, yes, she was searching for something far deeper than that which the mystic from Europe possessed. She told me she would know the person she needed to meet by the tremendous light emanating from him or her. No, not the brilliance of the sun, although it's there also. I mean the flash of light that arouses the inside of the brain. Satori, Enlightenment, or the Abyss, it makes no matter. The Great Paradox becomes evident. The single Atman, Adam, or Atom is contained inside the single human, and so do the infinite possibilities outside the barrier of the self. Then, as a final twist of miraculous fate, the process is reversed. A vision of Paradise and the Tree of Knowledge illuminates your body, and everything you touch is affected in this carnation and into the infinite possibilities of love and agony, colliding in karmic passion.

It was I who told Wyatt that Rabbi Sonenschein was not an authentic Kabbalist. My father was an intuitive, or authentic type. This fellow was the intellectual type, the poisoned and twisted

type. Why? My father stated it most succinctly, as one would imagine from where such wisdom emanated, when he told me, "An intellectual hides in a hole of prejudice and arrogance, even though that hole is located above the senses in an ivory tower. Sonenschein made his living as a scavenger of men's souls, creating tricks of illusion and a game they can play, for a price, to reach some kind of miraculous state. Each state of being, of course, is synchronous with both the inner realm of subjective reality, and the outer realm of objective reality.

Each level of the human senses and consciousness, becomes more advanced, gradually evolving, taking on new energy from experience and inward searching, until, one day, in the future, the most evolved of humans is extant. The Buddha, the Christ, the Prophet, the Redeemer, and the Creator, Destroyer and Preserver, are awakened from their hiding places. You see, the intuitive knows, while the intellectual does not know, how the life's energy travels from the lowest bowels of the scrotum or labia, upward, through the penis and uterus wall, held captive inside the heart to get the spark of life and the kiss of death, until the spiritual achievement is reached. One can no longer stand the pressure from the billions of lives lived on Earth or in some other planetary or light existence. One must pierce the top of the hierarchy and out into the stars of infinite expanses, or stay imprisoned forever within the Samsara of the mental intellect.

My father wanted that, and he tried to get me enthused about the inner life of the Kabbalah, but I merely listened, held transfixed by the sound of his words. I knew I was more interested in the words themselves as arbiters of the truth. Whereas others might see his words as nothing and as only praise for his handsome form and his regal bearing, which made him a potent avatar for life's energy. I saw that same light inside Wyatt's gray eyes. However, unlike the energy of my father, Wyatt's power over me came from how he behaved, his actions. My Tribe's most valuable essence is not gold, which is the bigot's understanding of my religion. The most valuable essence is the light of the Truth that our Lord is One. Once obtained, whether from an inner quest or from activities in the world around us, this essence of singular brightness and optimism will propel one into an infinite state of energy. This energy is the only creative force needed in the universe to keep everything together, allowing the continuity to unfold, as these creatures of the light portray an infinite array of identities in beautifully agonizing images, sizes and shapes. I knew that to Wyatt I could be this generator of energy, and he was my intuitive light to see the final Truth.

I understand. I do sound esoteric. However, this is truly what happened that night, as far as I can remember, and I do remember things very well. For example, I remember reading that you had to leave your lover back in San Francisco. Detective Isaiah Lees. Have you perused the territory in San Diego for possible beaux, Mrs. Foltz? As you might be aware, from your years in San Francisco, when the newest discovery of a precious gem or metal is made, or even the prospect of selling to those who pursue such dreams, the light of that moment heats up and the greed boils upward, frothing over everything, until only lust is left, but the women are few, and these women are passion itself, and they solve the immediate problem. Oh, so you do understand our little game. Women, or whatever passes for a woman, because gender identity is a fickle reality, become the keepers of that initial spark of rebellion in the Garden. Remember? We were blamed for our impetuous behavior when the snake figure, most likely symbolizing intuitive wisdom, gave us that forbidden fruit and told us we could live forever by knowing what God knows, and speaking as God speaks, forever and ever, amen. Just pierce that fruit with our teeth. Swallow those delectable juices of good and evil until you gag on bliss. That's what I thought when my father told me this. That's what Rabbi Sonenschein should have thought, but he was not intuitive, as I stated before. He was the intelligent male, the one who believes his introspection can shield him from the Truth. To him, there was no ultimate Truth or Higher Power. There was only what the intellect could

create. Shakespeare said it, didn't he? "There is nothing bad or good than thinking makes it so." Intellectual, the thinker, the follower of rules and the giver of the senses. I only believe what I can see, touch, taste, hear, and smell. But, what about that inner light? You know, the one inside that keeps you awake at night, wondering when it will go out, leaving you in the darkness. It is, after all, Death, which you, the intellectual, fears most. Why? Because the mind goes blank. Without the light there is only perpetual fear and the blackness of the abyss.

So, I followed Wyatt, for better or worse, because I knew he was my only chance at redemption from the barren life I had lived before. I am going to tell you my truth, as I believe that Wyatt has now crossed over to the forbidden level of consciousness. He made a bet with Mr. Anthony Comstock, about fulfilling a secret desire they both had. How do I know this? Believe it or not, Mrs. Foltz, what I will now tell you can sing the hide on young girls. Could you please send your daughter out of the room for a moment? No, I suppose you won't have this written down for the record. But you will know, won't you? Only the reader will be unaware. I think it makes the process rather enjoyable. Have you read that new tale by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle? Sherlock Holmes, his detective, turns to cocaine and opium because his mind moves too quickly. That is the dilemma, is it not? We who are more intellectual need something to slow down that mind because it travels so fast—moving from one possibility in an infinity of possibilities, to the next—until our time has run out. There was nothing more we could comprehend. It was one long race to fulfill desire and then there was nothing.

What was the wager? I hope you do realize the darker aspect behind intellectual Kabballah. This is the aspect Wyatt and I share, and why your daughter cannot be in here. We share the highest consciousness in Kabballah, the awareness of how the joining of bodies—no matter the sex—in a loving coital passion, brings ecstasy beyond human despair. What happens? We see ourselves bathed in the Universal Light, the *ein sof* itself. Indeed, this was to be the prize for Wyatt and myself once we created this passionate wonderland from Anthony Comstock's book. She did? Ida Bailey understood about the perversity of it all? How nice! I know her profession is to arouse the passions in the best way possible, but what Wyatt and I were creating was much more than just sexual arousal and physical fulfillment. We were duplicating what this Grand Inquisitor of the Flesh secretly wanted to experience. Rabbi Sonenschein was merely the one who became Comstock's foil, his momentary antagonist, and it was my husband who was being used as the scapegoat, and I became the figure of Beatrice, leading these two poor Dantes out of their personal hell.

I shall. I shall tell you. I just did not want your young daughter to overhear, lest she believe that our secret power in life is to lead men astray. She probably is taught this in school. What? Why, that women tempt and betray men, in the negative sense; but the truth is that it is their wifely duties that are the evil side, and no teacher ever tells them that. But I do! And, Bertha May, lovely, pristine Eve that she most certainly is, has no reason to hear of that right now. Only we older women, we women with the wily old smiles, and easy, open corsets. We, the *femme fatales*, the ones who can propel men into states of unrelenting lust, with our words and with our bodies. Yes, please go get her. Once she returns, I shall tell you the story of the Passion of Anthony Comstock. This shall be for your record.

Thank you. Now I can continue. This is a murder story meant for the darkest nether regions and lower levels of the Kabballah's Tree of Life and a human's mind. It was within this loamy and abundantly lusty soil, where Comstock's unconscious mind was controlled, which made him afraid of the power being held over him, but he knew not what to do to make it stop. Why should he not ask the Marshal of the Intuitive Joy to help him recover from his night sweats and his vivid,

raving dreams of pubescent boys and girls, cavorting unclothed in the lush green hills of his native New Canaan, Connecticut? We told Mr. Comstock about the New Promised Land of his dreams, where he could run with these children as he once did as a youth, with Miss Pricilla Warren, daughter of the town parson. He told us he ran deep into the forest, where they both plunged onto a pile of fall leaves, and he saw her auburn hair mix with the brown, yellow and crimson hues of the season's sacrifice, the season's Thanksgiving of wonders he could never experience today in his adult life. We would provide these passionate young creatures for him, in Tijuana, where he could romp with abandon, and his love for them would not be forbidden, the way it is in the States. After all, Wyatt and I told him, his secret desires were the Alpha and the Omega, and we were going to explain how he could live out his fantasies forever, with our guidance.

Of course, it was all possible in Mexico. This is the dark land between the greed of San Diego, and its real estate boom, and the corrupt officials in Tijuana, is it not? What am I telling you? I'm telling you that Wyatt killed the rabbi because he was going to expose the real truth behind our enterprise and who was controlling it. Ida Bailey's dance was the precursor to this expose. Sonenschein knew half of San Diego's government was attending the 100-Round Fight, and he was about to announce to them all what we had provided to Postmaster Comstock and to the other men who had such aberrational fantasies. No, this was not the only reason Wyatt shot him. The rabbi was also planning to destroy Ida Bailey and her house of ill repute, the Canary Cottage, as well as all the other bordellos in San Diego. This was his personal path to release the *ein sof* inside them. He believed the divine light had to be rescued from sin and debauchery. How do I know this is fact? Because Rabbi Jerome Sonenschein was not alone. He had formed a secret cabal of followers, and Wyatt and I discovered this when Dr. Charlotte Baker told us about its existence after she discovered Ida Bailey had become a member. You see, Dr. Baker treated all the prostitutes in San Diego, free of charge, as she wanted to convince them to see the light and to get out of the profession forever. Dr. Baker also founded the Young Women's Christian Association and was the new President of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. She told us it was her goal to close down the Stingaree district forever.

Who was behind our business venture in Tijuana? Is it not strange how life often goes in circles, Mrs. Foltz? Our dear friend and benefactor, Mayor Honey Hunsaker, was our main contributor, and he was behind many other similar enterprises across the border.