

The Insomnia Experiment

By Phoebe Von Satis

Chapter One

The heavy iron gates of Galug Camp creaked open, revealing a desolate landscape shrouded in darkness. The chilling winds howled through the barren trees and across an empty road that had once been a part of a bustling city. Powdery snow fell from the grey, overcast sky, with not a ray of sunlight in sight. A truck pulled in through the main gate, carrying twelve prisoners of war (POWs) and four cows. When the truck came to a halt, the POWs were immediately led outside by their grim-faced captors. The men in the vehicle were released one by one, sternly instructed to stand in a single file line by the men in charge.

"Move it, you dogs!" one of the guards barked, his voice rough and commanding.

The prisoners shuffled forward, their hands bound behind their backs, their eyes filled with fear and resignation. The camp was a grim sight, with barbed wire fencing enclosing the compound. The POWs were herded into a dilapidated barracks, the wooden floor creaking under their weight. The prisoners were lined up against the wall, their guards standing watch with rifles at the ready. The POWs exchanged uneasy glances, their hearts pounding with fear. Boris, a 65-year-old man with a potbelly, who wore an M69 Captain's

Uniform and walked with a limp, marched over and stood before them. His beady eyes scanned each of the men intently. Beside him was Yuri, a 42-year-old with a slender build, also wearing a clean and freshly ironed M69 uniform. Boris stopped to stare at two of the men: Hans, a 42-year-old with a slender build, wearing a ragged SS uniform. He stood at attention, sporting a black and blue eye and a bloody broken nose. Next to him was Klaus, a 60-year-old with a heavy build, also in a ragged SS uniform and in poor medical shape.

After a moment of silence, Boris addressed the group, "I want you Nazis to know that you are not on vacation! Far from it! Welcome to my camp. Anything you do will be held against you. You have lost the war and now you must pay for the damage you have done to the USSR and our comrades. We got a truck in today of a mix of Prisoners of War and Criminals of War. Right, Comrade?"

Yuri responded affirmatively, "You're correct, sir."

Boris acknowledged Yuri before turning his attention back to the prisoners, "Listen closely, because I'm only going to say this once. Each and every one of you is here for one specific reason, and that is to pay your dues. Some of you will die, very few of you will live. Personally, I'd rather you all die an excruciatingly painful death for what you did to our comrades in Leningrad... But you are here because Stalin wants you to learn a lesson... And we also have a little experiment for you to participate in."

Fear began to creep through the men's wavering confidence. Boris then instructed Yuri to explain further.

Yuri paced in front of the men, making sure to engage in eye contact with each of them as he spoke. "Starting today, you will all be in chambers. And it could not be more perfect. Why, might you ask?" He presented a deranged smile. "Because you all must be exhausted from that long train and cargo truck ride. You must want to get a good night's rest?"

Yuri halted and turned toward Boris. They nodded in unison.

"Tough luck," Yuri continued.

The room was filled with a tense silence as the men remained quiet, their faces etched with worry. Yuri, their captor, stood at the head of the room, a sinister smile playing on his lips.

"You see, my friends," Yuri began, his voice dripping with malice, "As I said, I have a little experiment in mind for you all."

The men exchanged uneasy glances, unsure of what Yuri had in store for them.

"What kind of experiment?" one of the men dared to ask, his voice trembling.

Yuri chuckled darkly.

"An experiment in sleep deprivation," he announced, "I plan to keep you all awake for fifteen days straight."

The men gasped in horror, their hearts pounding in their chests.

"But how?" another man spoke up, his voice filled with disbelief.

"That's not possible," another added.

Yuri's smile widened. The men recoiled, realizing the gravity of their situation.

"You will be forced into a state of perpetual exhaustion," Yuri explained, his eyes gleaming with madness. "And I will observe the effects on your minds and bodies."

Fear gripped the men as they realized the nightmare they were about to endure.

"You can't do this to us!" one of the men shouted, his voice filled with desperation. Yuri's laughter filled the room, a chilling sound that sent shivers down their spines.

"Oh, but I can," Yuri said, his voice cold and calculating. "And I will."

The men knew they had no choice but to comply with Yuri's twisted experiment. They were trapped, after all. The men struggled to stop their legs from trembling. Without any further explanation, the soldiers marched away, leaving the men to process the horror that was soon to unfold.

As the night wore on, the prisoners huddled together for warmth, their breath misting in the cold air.

"I can't take much more of this," one of the prisoners whispered, his voice filled with despair, "I just want to go home."

"We all do," another replied, patting him on the back.

"But we have to stay strong. We'll find a way out of here, I promise."

The hours dragged on, each minute feeling like an eternity. The prisoners tried to sleep, but the cold and the fear kept them awake, their minds racing with thoughts of escape.

Suddenly, there was a commotion outside, the sound of raised voices and running feet. The prisoners tensed, their hearts pounding in their chests.

"What's going on?" one of them whispered, his eyes wide with fear.

The door to the barracks burst open, and the group of guards stormed in, their faces grim and determined.

"Up, you dogs!" one of them shouted. "it's time".

The prisoners were herded outside, where they saw a line of trucks waiting, their engines idling. The guards forced them into the back of the trucks, the metal walls cold and unforgiving.

"Where are they taking us?" one of the prisoners asked, his voice trembling with fear.

"I don't know," replied another, his face pale with worry. "But whatever it is, it can't be good."

The trucks rumbled to life, their headlights cutting through the darkness as they drove deeper into the night. The prisoners huddled together, their hearts heavy with dread. After what felt like hours, when in reality, was less than ten minutes, the trucks came to a stop. The guards herded the prisoners out, their rifles trained on them.

"What do they want to do this to us?" one of the prisoners whispered, his voice barely audible.

"I don't know," another replied, his eyes darting nervously.

"Silence!" a guard snapped, his voice cold and menacing, "Welcome to the chambers."

Chapter Two

Evening fell in the chambers, a twisted maze of a dungeon where the men huddled together. Klaus sat hunched over, his fingers trembling and rubbing as if he were rolling a cigarette, torturing himself. Hans nervously glanced around, his eyes struggling to adjust to the dark conditions. He leaned over to whisper to Klaus.

"We have to stick together if we are going to make it," Hans urged.

"I don't know if I can," Klaus replied.

"Stick together or make it?" Hans asked.

"The latter," Klaus admitted.

"Don't say that. We can. I know we can!" Hans insisted, trying to infuse some hope into his voice.

Klaus shook his head. "Look at me... I am overweight, I am a chain smoker, and I am already going insane without my cigarettes. I know I'm going to die."

Hans glared at him, disappointment evident in his gaze. Boris strode deeper into the dimly lit dungeon, his heavy boots clanging against the stone floor. He was hoping an entrance would appear, his mind trying to forget he'd already searched the chambers three times. The other prisoners huddled in fear, their eyes stretched wide with apprehension.

"You are all here for a reason," Boris bellowed, his voice echoing through the darkness and off the cold walls.

A chorus of terrified whispers filled the air as the prisoners exchanged worried glances. They knew that Boris was not a man to be trifled with.

"Please, have mercy," one of the prisoners pleaded, his voice trembling with fear.

Boris stepped into the light, glaring at them through the small hole in the thick wall. He fixed the man with a steely gaze, his lips curling into a cruel smile. The prisoners cowered before him, their faces pale

with terror as Boris paced back and forth, his eyes scanning the room with a predatory gleam. With a final glance at the trembling prisoners, Boris turned on his heel and strode out of the dungeon, leaving behind a trail of fear and despair in his wake.

As the heavy door clanged shut behind him, the prisoners were left alone in the darkness, their hearts heavy with dread as they contemplated the grim future that awaited them.

Meanwhile, in the pristine control room, Boris returned to Yuri, who stood silently nearby. The two knew the plan, they had been over it countless times. Boris nodded, and Yuri responded by periodically twisting the insomnia gas valve. The experiment had begun.

Chapter Three

Morning had dawned, yet the chambers remained ominously dark, with no hint of the outside world's light to penetrate the oppressive gloom. It was Day 2 of their ordeal. Klaus and Hans, though clearly exhausted, were still awake. They stood a few feet apart, leaning wearily against the cold, damp walls of the chamber. Klaus's eyes were bloodshot, and his face was drawn with fatigue. The back of his hand was flared red, irritated, and raw from where he had been pinching himself incessantly in a desperate bid to fend off sleep. Every few moments, his eyes would flutter shut, only for him to jerk awake, breathing heavily as panic kept him alert. Hans, too, was fighting his own battle against the overwhelming desire to sleep. He occasionally glanced over at Klaus, concern etched on his features. Despite his exhaustion, he tried to stay alert, knowing they needed to support each other if they had any chance of surviving this experiment. Around them, the other men exhibited varying degrees of distress. Most paced restlessly around the chamber, their movements erratic and aimless, driven by a frantic energy born of fear and fatigue. The sound of their footsteps echoed softly in the confined

space, a constant reminder of their ceaseless struggle. One man stood apart from the rest, unmoving, staring blankly into the darkness. His eyes were wide open, but his gaze was unfocused, as if he were looking through the walls and into some distant, unreachable place. His stillness was unsettling, a stark contrast to the nervous activity of the others.

The air in the chamber was thick with the smell of sweat and fear, and a palpable tension hung over the group. The relentless pressure of the situation was beginning to take its toll on all of them, and the chamber seemed to close in on them, an ever-tightening grip that threatened to squeeze out their last reserves of hope and sanity.

As the days passed, the men struggled to stay awake, their bodies growing weaker with each passing hour. Sleep became a distant memory, replaced by a constant sense of exhaustion that weighed them down. Their minds began to play tricks on them, hallucinations dancing at the edges of their vision.

"I can't do this anymore," one of the men whispered, his voice filled with despair.

Another man let out a strangled scream, the sound echoing through the empty room. Yuri watched with glee as his subjects descended into madness, his eyes alight with a sickening fascination.

"Just a few more days," Yuri urged, his voice a cruel whisper, "You're almost there."

The men groaned in agony, their bodies trembling with fatigue.

"Please, let us sleep," one of the men begged, tears streaming down his face.

But Yuri's smile never wavered; his heart was devoid of empathy.

"Sleep is a luxury you no longer deserve," Yuri declared, his words like a death sentence.

The men's wills were broken, their spirits crushed under the weight of Yuri's cruel experiment.

Chapter Four

They had lost track of the days. It could have been four, it could have been fourteen. There was no telling anymore. The men were struggling mightily to stay awake. The dimly lit chamber echoed Klaus's screams as he clawed at the walls, his eyes wild with desperation.

"Please, let me out! I can't take it anymore!" he cried, his voice hoarse from days of torment.

Hans, sitting in a corner with his back against the cold stone wall, tried to block out Klaus's cries. His forehead pressed against the cold, unforgiving wall of the chamber.

"My brain... it feels like it's on fire. I need to sleep. We all need to sleep," he murmured, his voice tinged with desperation.

A quiet beat hung in the air, heavy with the fatigue and despair of the prisoners.

Suddenly, a loud clap shattered the silence as Klaus clapped his hands right in front of Hans. Each thunderous clap jolted Hans, forcing his eyes open wider, making him more alert. The sound reverberated through the chamber, mingling with the moans of the other men, who shuffled about like zombies.

"We have to keep fighting, Klaus. We can't give up now," he said, his voice tinged with fear.

Suddenly, a loud creaking sound filled the chamber, making Klaus and Hans both jump in surprise.

"What was that?" Klaus asked, his eyes wide with fear. Hans strained to listen, his heart pounding in his chest.

"I don't know, but we need to be ready for anything," he replied, his voice steady despite the uncertainty.

The chamber fell silent, the only sound the soft hum of the flickering torches on the walls. Hans and Klaus exchanged a wary glance, their eyes searching the shadows for any sign of danger.

Amidst the eerie scene, one man, in his sixties, suddenly dropped to his knees. His movements were frantic and abrupt as he rolled up the sleeves of his shirt.

"Gotta get them out!" he muttered with a crazed urgency.

Without warning, he took one of his dirt-stained fingers and moved it toward his eye. Before any of the others could react, he began to pull out his eyeball. The other men watched in horror, unsure if they were hallucinating. The crazed man held up the bloody eyeball in front of him before dropping it to the floor, where it squelched upon impact. With a loud yell, he proceeded to tear out his second eye from its socket.

"Did he just...?" Klaus began, his voice trailing off in disbelief.

"Yes. He tore his own eyes out..." Hans confirmed, his voice barely above a whisper.

Blood poured from the man's empty eye sockets, and he fell to the ground with a mighty thwack, shaking uncontrollably. Despite his gruesome injuries, the now blind man lay on the ground, humming quietly to himself.

"Look. He's still alive..." Klaus pointed out, his voice a mix of horror and astonishment.

He then turned to Boris, who stood nearby.

"I don't wanna end up like that," Boris said, fear evident in his voice.

"You won't," Hans replied, though his assurance lacked conviction.

"You don't know that," Klaus countered, his voice trembling.

Hans, unable to offer any real comfort, turned his back to Klaus, mumbling something inaudible to himself. The chamber, filled with the sounds of shuffling feet, moans, and quiet humming, felt more oppressive than ever as the prisoners faced the bleak reality of their situation.

Yuri and Boris stood in the control room, their strict postures unable to hide the pleasure they took in hearing the events unfold below. Yuri twisted the insomnia gas valve some more, a smirk

playing at the corners of his mouth, while Boris jotted down notes on a notepad with methodical precision.

"It's now day five and the insomniac gas is doing its job," Boris remarked, his tone satisfied.

Yuri nodded in agreement, clearly pleased with their work. A reverberating scream echoed from one of the rooms in the chambers, but neither of them reacted. The sound seemed almost normal to them now, a part of the experiment's expected results. As the screams and moans continued, the two men remained focused on their tasks, detached from the horror they were orchestrating. Their enjoyment of the suffering they were inflicting was palpable, though unspoken, as they monitored the prisoners' descent into madness.

Chapter Five

In the chambers, the situation was deteriorating rapidly. Klaus dropped to his knees, his posture resembling that of someone about to pray.

Desperation colored his voice as he cried out, "What was that? Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned! Please help me!"

Hans, meanwhile, was overcome with a different kind of desperation.

"I am just famished! Klaus, I'm just so hungry. I'm starving!" His eyes darted around the chamber, landing on a man hunched in a corner, his body weak and trembling.

Hans pointed toward the figure. "I think that guy is probably having a nervous breakdown... Or maybe he's shell-shocked from the war? I can't even tell anymore, but I think the one with the missing eyes might still be alive. It's been over a week, and all I can think about is food. That's all I can think about!"

Klaus, his starvation evident, responded, "I'm hungry too, my friend, but I'm more interested in a cigarette than food."

Unbeknownst to Klaus, Hans had reached behind his back and quietly grasped a dislodged brick.

With grim determination, he crept up beside Klaus, who was still muttering about their dire situation.

"If we stick together, we'll have—" Klaus began, his voice trailing off as he spoke.

Without warning, Hans swung the brick with brutal force, striking Klaus on the head. The impact was sudden and shocking, sending Klaus sprawling to the ground.

"I just can't take it anymore!" Hans shouted, his voice echoing with a mix of anger and despair.

Hans then pulled out a Russian utility knife he had hidden, and with a grim efficiency, he began to slice and skin the moaning Klaus. The sight was grotesque as Hans carefully peeled away the flesh, driven by an insatiable hunger.

"I'm so hungry!" Hans muttered as he tore pieces of Klaus's flesh and hungrily shoved the bloody meat into his mouth with both hands.

The chamber, already steeped in madness and despair, now bore witness to an even more horrifying scene of survival and savagery.

Chapter Six

On Day 6, the chambers lay in a suffocating darkness, the air heavy with a sense of lifelessness. The silence was profound, broken only by the occasional, unsettling squeak of the door hinges as Boris and Yuri approached. The flicker of their flashlights revealed nothing but shadows and grime, their own uneasy footsteps the only sound. When they finally unlocked the heavy chamber door, a sense of foreboding accompanied their every move. As the door creaked open, a ghastly scene unfolded before them. They were immediately hit with the overwhelming stench of decay and the sight of Klaus's horrific corpse

lying in the middle of the room. The body was grotesquely covered in maggots and swarming with flies, the once-human form now a grotesque tableau of suffering and neglect. Boris and Yuri stood frozen for a moment, their eyes wide with shock and horror. The sight was beyond their worst expectations, a nightmarish testament to the inhumanity that had taken root within the chamber. Boris's hand flew to his mouth, his face pale as he struggled to comprehend the scene before him. Boris and Yuri stood frozen at the entrance of the makeshift prison camp, aghast at the scene before them. The air was heavy with the stench of blood and decay, echoing with the distant moans of the remaining prisoners.

"What in the name of God?" Boris gasped, his voice trembling with a mixture of disbelief and revulsion.

He took a step back, unable to tear his eyes away from the horrifying tableau.

As they stepped further into the room, the stench of death and decay assaulted their senses. Boris stumbled over a body, his foot coming into contact with cold, clammy flesh. He recoiled in horror, his stomach churning with revulsion. Yuri, his face reflecting a blend of disgust and confusion, looked around the chamber with a grim expression.

"Who is responsible for such horror?" he asked, his voice barely more than a whisper, as if speaking louder might make the scene more real.

Boris, clearly enraged and overwhelmed by the grotesque scene, slammed the chamber door shut with a resounding bang. His face was set in a hard, unforgiving line.

"You Nazis can't be trusted!" he shouted angrily, his frustration boiling over.

Without waiting for a response or any further inspection, Boris swiftly engaged the lock, sealing the door with a decisive clank. The remaining men inside were now completely cut off from the outside world. The echoes of their distress, mingled with the oppressive stench of death, were now confined within the chamber's dark

recesses. As Boris and Yuri walked away, their faces reflected a grim satisfaction and a deep-seated revulsion at the horrifying state of their experiment's outcome.

Moments later in the control room, Yuri and Boris appeared ghostly pale, visibly shaken by the ghastly scene they had just witnessed. The gravity of the situation weighed heavily on them, their faces reflecting a deep unease.

"What should we do? How are we to handle this?" Yuri asked, his voice betraying his anxiety, "No one is actually going to confess?"

Boris, still grappling with the sight of Klaus's decayed body, shook his head.

"There are maggots and flies all over that corpse," he said, his voice grim. The horror of the situation was evident in his expression. Yuri considered their options.

"Should we gas them all?" he suggested, his eyes darting to the gas controls.

Boris contemplated this for a moment.

"That would save us a lot of trouble," he conceded.

"Or we could starve them and make them suffer more," Yuri proposed, weighing another form of torment.

Boris shook his head, a dark look crossing his face. "But then it could give that murderer a chance to eat the rest."

Yuri looked at Boris, seeking a definitive answer. Boris's face hardened with resolve.

"We have no choice," he said firmly.

Boris turned the valve, releasing the deadly gas into the prison camp.

The sound of hiss filled the room, drowning out the cries of the prisoners outside. The minutes stretched into eternity as Boris and Yuri waited in silence, the weight of their decision heavy upon them. The only sound was the hiss of the gas, a chilling reminder of the fate they had sealed for the prisoners. With that, Boris marched to the control panel and turned the gas knob with a decisive, forceful motion. The clock on the wall ticked steadily, reading 3 o'clock as

Yuri watched with a concerned expression that slowly shifted to relief. The gas was now at full capacity.

The loud screams from within the chamber grew increasingly intense, reverberating through the walls with a harrowing volume that could be heard for half a mile. Hans's screams were the loudest, his voice piercing through the cacophony of agony.

"PLEASE, OPEN THE DOOR! HELP! FFFIIRREE!!!" His cries for help and desperate pleas echoed with a chilling urgency.

Boris and Yuri stood, their breathing heavy and labored as they remained focused on the control panel. They fought to block out the horrifying sounds and maintain their composure. The screams seemed to stretch on forever, a relentless reminder of the cruelty they had orchestrated. Eventually, the screams began to fall silent, the chamber's anguished cries fading into a haunting quiet. The only sound left was the steady tick of the clock, marking the passing of time.

Chapter Seven

In the chamber, Hans, drenched in blood and hiding in the shadows, was lost in a state of madness. His body twitched and swayed, a grotesque reflection of his fractured mind.

"They're not going to release me, are they? I'll never be able to say goodbye to my family. But they promised!!" Hans's voice trembled with despair, a haunting echo of his torment.

Suddenly, the hissing sound resonated from above as the section of the chamber began to fill with the gas. The once-stifling air grew thicker, obscuring the men's view and intensifying their fear.

An hour later, with trembling hands, Boris turned the rusted doorknob, the creaking sound echoing through the hallway like a mournful cry. Yuri's breath caught in his throat as the door swung open, revealing a sight that would forever be seared into their

memories. The room was dimly lit, the flickering torches casting eerie shadows on the walls. Bodies lay strewn across the floor, their lifeless eyes staring blankly into nothingness. Blood stained the ground, a gruesome testament to the horrors that had unfolded within these walls. Yuri let out a strangled gasp, his hand flying to his mouth in horror. Boris felt bile rise in his throat, his mind struggling to process the scene before him. They had heard the screams, the desperate pleas for mercy, but nothing could have prepared them for the devastation that now lay before their eyes. Hans' voice had been the last they heard, a gut-wrenching scream that faded into a chilling silence. The once vibrant chamber was now a tomb, a grim reminder of the darkness that lurked within the hearts of men. In the now-silent chamber, shadows cloaked the men's lifeless bodies, sprawled out in various locations. The grim reality of their situation was laid bare as the room's darkness swallowed up the remains, leaving behind a chilling reminder of the inhumanity that had unfolded within those walls.