

[Stockholm Story – a working title]

By Bianca C. Isaias

It was late. The summer sun was just starting to set over Stockholm's harbor. The city was quiet. The thin orange strip on the horizon illuminated the buildings by the sea shore, the sun hiding behind a tall steeple protruding from the row of five-story buildings visible from sea-level, producing a mirror image of the coastline on the surface of the water.

By the sea everything seemed dark, but there was enough light coming from the purple-hued sky for one to weave his way around a ship's cabin. The crisp evening air penetrated the docks, colder than regular sea breeze due to the unsalted condition of the Baltic. The urban dwellers were returning home and the solitude that permeated the harbor allowed Carl to relax.

He watched in silence as the sky dimmed. His remaining tasks almost completed; he was in no rush, so long as he finished before daybreak. He stroked his blonde mustache and slowly sipped his glass of whisky – so crude a bottle that the acrid taste was surely damaging his taste buds permanently. He drank it anyway, whisky gave a man an air of luxury, besides he enjoyed its smell and the slight drowsiness it afforded from a small serving.

His attention shifted as the lights came on in an apartment complex a fair distance away, being jarred from his thoughts he rose and made his way to the cabin. He began to scrub his glass slowly and carefully, to dry the sink, and mop the floor as he retraced his steps from the back of the cabin to the deck until he finally stepped onto the dock.

He lay the mop on the floor of deck.

He had put his gloves on much earlier, in anticipation of the sunset chill. He strolled towards the metro stop, beginning the journey back to his ground-floor apartment on 15 Vastmannagatan.

Carl had refilled his prescription for sleeping pills a couple of weeks before. He had been suffering from a sleeping disorder for several months and still

hesitated in taking the medications every night. In his mind it was worse to become addicted than to be deprived of sleep.

In his small kitchen, he prepared oatmeal. he happily recalled that he would be able to sleep straight way, as he'd added his mashed sleeping pills to the bottle of whisky on the ship – the few sips he drank had been enough to have an effect on him. The professor hadn't had the same luck.

But that was the way Carl had planned it, after all. He didn't want the old man to ever wake up. The body would surely be found within the coming days and professor Bergstrom would soon be forgotten. The death was too inconspicuous and suicides were all too common. Besides, he had been very careful in leaving no evidence having carefully scrubbed the place down - from fingerprints to footprints. He was like a ghost that left no trace of his existence.

But that was Carl's biggest mistake. He was too clean. He had unthinkingly erased the old man's fingerprints off his whisky glass because Carl had touched the glass as well. This detail would not go unnoticed by the Swedish Police Service a few days later.