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DEER
ISLAND

THE IVY LEAGUE CHRONICLES

Chapter 1



A considerable element had come to College (Yale) to learn not from books, but from each other—not how to be scholars, but how to succeed. Success was really their goal, not Veritas. What they were surely preparing for in their competitions was the struggle of making a living...

The undergraduates knew that provided they first learned the rules of the game, they were destined for great prizes, sure to make fortunes, and bound for managing posts in society.

- George Pierson *Yale College: An Educational History 1871-1921*

In the Fall of 1923, her first year at Yale University, Maize was scouting the student lounge for Greg, a reporter for the all-male student newspaper, *Yale Daily News*. She surmised earlier he seemed the most approachable

school newspaper reporter to befriend, and eventually, hopefully, give him her articles to which he could sign his name. She let him think it was by accident; it was no accident. It was intentional. Greg, who was in his second year at Yale University majoring in journalism, would be Maize's best chance to write for the all-male reporting team.

That was the only way her writing would be published at the all-male dominated Yale University. Reluctant, but somewhat intrigued with Maize, Greg agreed to give it a try. Her article covering the Yale-Harvard football game in the fall of 1923 attracted much interest, much more than the article he wrote. From that moment on, he gladly accepted any articles from her.

Maize's latest article, in late January of the second semester of the academic 1924-25 school year, questioned many of the Skull and Bones secretive rituals rumored around campus. The article hinted that the Skulls were up to no good, in that she had nothing substantial to suggest foul play. Greg did not feel good about submitting her latest article to the Yale student newspaper editor, but Maize could be quite persuasive when she said she would not write any more articles for him. That threat always worked. Greg had become a popular student journalist

because of their partnership, and he did not want to jeopardize his notoriety amongst his peers. He would submit her article to be printed in the next edition of the Yale Daily News.

He was not surprised when he received notice from the student editor his article was rejected with no reasons attached. No one crossed the Skulls, but he did not expect to receive a threatening phone call from an unknown source.

“Hello,” Greg answered when summoned to the Connecticut dorm hallway phone.

“I have just gotten off the phone with our people.”

“Our people? Who is this?” Greg asked.

“Yes, our people. We demand to know where you got your information.”

“What information?” Greg asked. The abrupt tone of the man on the other end of the phone made him feel uneasy.

“Who is this?” he asked sheepishly.

There was a long pause.

Greg assumed the person on the other end of the phone was talking about the article that was just rejected. “I have never been in the Tomb, and I did nothing illegal... in the process of writing the article.” Greg’s

voice began to quiver.

“Then you must have gotten your information from one of us. Tell me who you spoke to. We just want to talk to him.”

Greg took a moment to think. “I don’t reveal my sources.”

The caller started screaming. “A lot of people are very dependent over this. There are a lot of us working at newspapers and political journalism institutions.” The caller took a deep, calming breath, then continued. “This article is not ethical or honorable for someone to make a decent living as a journalist in the future.”

“Okay.” Greg was now beginning to shake with trepidation at his belligerent insinuations.

“We do not like being in the spotlight. Good luck with your career... and your life.” With that, the caller slammed down the phone.

Greg was beside himself. He sat rigidly frozen with fear in his dorm room for hours with the door locked and all the window shades pulled, afraid to walk outside his door. He had to think. *I cannot contact Maize. Then they will suspect she is the source. I can’t call the student editor to ask what happened, as it may attract too much unwanted attention... I know they will be watching me. It*

had to be someone associated with the Skulls. Oh, no... it is well known on campus that you do not want to cross the Skulls... people have gone missing. What should I do now? Who can help me?

* * * *

At noon, Scott met Maize at the Taft in his new 1924 mustard Maxwell Sports Touring convertible, which was a gift from the Skulls. They had previously set a date to have lunch at their favorite pizza joint on The Green, The Spot. The Spot, owned by Frank Pepe, was a popular pizza restaurant and hangout for young and old alike that specialized in their famous white pizza—a thin-crust pizza baked in a brick oven and topped with white sauce, garlic, cheese, and clams.

She was waiting at the Taft Hotel entrance, tapping her foot in frustration, as Scott was late as usual. But no matter how late he was, she was always glad to spend time with her brother. Maize was anxious to talk to him now that she, her father, and Professor Wikki were concerned with his behavior since he was Knighted a Skull. Lately, all three noticed he did not seem himself, especially since her abduction during the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade in New York City last year. Something was bothering him.

It was the end of January; second semester was in full swing. It was her second year at Yale University forging through yet another year to earn a Liberal Arts degree, which she referred to as a petticoat diploma. Women could attend Yale if they stayed on their small side of the campus, pursuing a Liberal Arts or Nursing degree. However, Maize's goals were much higher than a simple Liberal Arts diploma.

She had worked the last two years with the once Scotland Yard detective, and now professor at Yale University and Chair of the Criminology Department, Professor Wikki, and as a result, her experiences had piqued her interest in uncovering what was hidden. Now, because of her innate interest in journalistic writing and her experiences with Professor Wikki, she thought it was a perfect fit to become an investigative journalist after graduation.

Upon returning for second semester, Mazie found herself very busy. Besides attending classes and completing her homework assignments, she continued to work at her father's paper, the *New Haven Gazette*, as a society reporter, and she wrote a few articles on the side for Yale's student newspaper. She was also Professor Wikki's research assistant, and sometimes a partner in

crime. In addition to all these activities, she was adjusting to life with Leslie Davenport, her childhood girlfriend who had just returned from Vassar, in her lush apartment on the top floor of the Taft Hotel owned by her father, John Davenport.

The holiday vacation between semesters provided time for Maize to recover from her unexpected abduction during the Thanksgiving Macy's Day Parade in New York City. Her mother would not let her out of her sight, and her father called several times a day from the newspaper to check on her. Everyone seemed to be hovering to protect her from the unwanted attention of her well-meaning friends. She enjoyed the solitude of her room and the warmth of her faithful golden retriever, Sandy. The feel of her soft, long golden hair always eased Maize when requiring a little extra attention and distraction from the latest events in her life.

Then there was Tommy, wise guy of the New Haven Irish mob, someone whom she met while working with Greg soliciting advertisements for the student newspaper, *Yale Daily News*. To Maize, he was very annoying, but to Tommy, he was smitten by her free-spirited personality and big blue sparkling eyes. Their friendship, if you could call it that, was rocky and pursued only by Tommy. He

prided himself in looking after her as he believed she was an accident waiting to happen.

While Maize tried feverously to ignore his advances, Tommy, obviously smitten by her, loved to tease her by calling her Lil' Miss Muffin, hoping to elicit her favor. To Maize's surprise, he was always there to rescue her from one crisis or another, despite her repulsed gestures and comments. First, he saved her from being carted off in a paddy wagon by a police raid at the Taft Hotel speakeasy. Then, he took the fall by being knocked out by Richard Wikki when he rescued her from the café where she was spying on his gang. And then at Lady Peacock's party, where Richard had received a note that his and Maize's life was in danger, Tommy threw her over his shoulder to remove her from the party as Professor Wikki had asked.

Tommy was beside himself when he discovered he was not there when Maize needed him. He did not know about what transpired in New York until after Thanksgiving when he happened to run into Scott, who by now had become somewhat of a friend. Tommy decided to protect her by having his men surveil her house daily, until she moved in with Leslie, standing outside of her house for hours at a time. Peering out her bedroom window, Maize noticed their undying protection day and night, watching for anyone suspicious. For some odd

reason, she wasn't quite sure. Now Maize surprisingly found comfort in Tommy's protective nature.

Why someone wanted to hurt her haunted her nightly the first few weeks upon returning home from a short stay at the Yale New Haven Hospital. She could not understand why these people, whomever they were, wanted to harm her. What did they want? Her father and Professor Wikki were closemouthed and would offer no satisfying answers. Random, mistaken identity did not seem realistic. She knew both were hiding something. Their silence only piqued her interest. Maize was now determined to find out... but not sure where to start.

During the short ride to The Green, Maize complained she never knew how to dress as of late because of the unpredictable weather. "Today the weather high is fifty-three degrees, and, in a few days, it is predicted to be in the thirties. It's amazing I don't come down with a cold."

Scott added, "It makes it difficult to choose a proper outer coat to walk across campus. You are either too hot or too cold.

"Look!" Scott exclaimed upon entering The Green square. Scott was ecstatic he found an open place in front of The Spot to park, so he could show off his new convertible Touring.

"Thanks," Maize replied, as her brother opened the

car door for her.

Grinning, Scott replied, “Always a gentleman, Lil’ Miss Muffin.” Scott knew he would get a rise out of his sister, as she loathed the term Tommy had thought was such an endearing nickname for her.

“Humph!” she replied defiantly as she entered The Spot.

“Glad to see it is not busy today. Let’s sit over there.” Maize pointed to the empty table near the back wall. “The professor always likes to sit next to a wall so he can see what is happening around him.” She did not want Scott to know she chose this table intentionally so no one could overhear them talking.

Before Scott took his seat, he mentioned he would order their pizza and a couple of lemonades at the front counter. Choosing the seat so her back would be against the wall, Maize took off her light jacket and laid it on the chair next to her. Maize nodded her head and watched Scott as he walked towards the front counter. *He always looks so dapper. Why did he have to get mixed up with the Skulls?* She recalled all the fun times they used to have together before his fourth year as the Skulls monopolized his time; he was so secretive about his time with them. She knew very little about his life now, though she thought her father and the professor knew more than they were

letting on. *I wonder if Scott knows about the article Greg wanted to post in the next edition of the student newspaper, and if he knew it was rejected, and why?*

As Scott turned to return to their table, Maize recalled the secretive encounter Greg had insisted on a few nights earlier. It did not surprise her the article was rejected, but it did surprise her the lengths someone would go to suppress it. She recalled how scared Greg seemed, trembling almost uncontrollably, as he related the phone call he had received from an unknown source. She thought he had overreacted, and that he should put it out of his mind and move on. She promised to write a new story which would appease everyone. She recalled as he walked away he seemed like a lost, scared puppy.

“It will be just a sec,” Scott mentioned as he took the seat across from Maize, displaying his back to the front of the pizza parlor.

Scott was now paranoid about Maize’s safety. From his recollection, this would be the third time someone had had to save her. Once when the Irish mob abducted her, once when her father thought she was in danger for her life at the Skulls’ party at Lady Peacock’s home, and now at the Macy’s Day Thanksgiving Parade. Scott would never forget the moment he saw her lying lifelessly

on the cold pavement with her head encompassed in her father's arms. At that moment, he vowed to get to the bottom of what had happened. His father told him little, and Professor Wikki even less. He knew they were hiding something, and he was going to find out come hell or high water if the Skulls had anything to do with his sister's abduction.

"Maize, how have you been feeling? Sorry I have not seen you since... the... accident." Scott's voice faded as he lowered his head. "The Skulls keep me extremely busy. Now we are going to start screening prospective candidates for the 1925-26 school year." He straightened and then continued in his normal voice, "I haven't even heard how you are doing since you have moved into Leslie's apartment. What a posh place."

Maize did not want to talk about what had happened to her at the end of November, so she focused her thoughts on settling into Leslie's place. "I must get used to things being done for me, like the bed made, clothes laid out, laundry done... and so on. They keep saying, 'Anything you want, you just to need to ask.' Leslie grew up in this lifestyle... she revels in it. Me... well... I'm trying to get used to it. But I refuse to let someone turn down my bed... I can do that myself!"

Scott did not want to sound too eager, revealing he

did enjoy Leslie's company. "How is Leslie these days? I think the last time I saw her was when the three of us went to the movies."

"Leslie has asked how you are doing and when you might come to see how things are going since I moved in."

"That sounds like a great opportunity to see her again. Shall we plan a time?"

"*The Fool* has returned upon request at the Shubert this Saturday. It's billed as the greatest play of modern times. They have a matinee and evening showing," Maize suggested. "You could see how I have settled in when you pick us up at her apartment."

"Sounds good. I can kill two birds with one stone," agreed Scott.

"Let me check with her and I will get back with you. Hopefully, between our three busy schedules, we can work something."

Scott nodded his head. "Sounds like a plan."

The pizza arrived, and both Scott and Maize dug in. "I'm starving," Maize muttered as she grabbed a warm piece of white pizza fresh out of the oven.

In between bites, Maize tried to probe Scott as to what he was doing lately with the Skulls. But digging for information, as always, was a dead end.

Changing the subject, Scott asked, "Maize, have

you ever been in Harkness Tower to see carillon bells being played?”

Mazie shook her head no as she stuffed another bite in her mouth.

“I have a friend who has been trained to play them. He is playing tomorrow at 5:30. Would you like a tour and watch him play the chimes?”

“That sounds like fun. I will meet you in front of Harkness Tower tomorrow... let’s say around 5:15.”

“That’s a date.”

Harkness Tower is 216 feet (66 m) tall, one foot for each year since Yale’s founding at the time it was built. From a square base, it rises in stages to a double stone crown on an octagonal base, and at the top are stone finials. From the street level to the roof, there are 284 steps. Midway to the top, four openwork copper clockfaces tell the hours. The bells of the carillon are behind the clockfaces, fixed to a frame made of steel I-beams.

The playing console of the carillon is at the level of the balconies immediately below the clockfaces. The lower levels of the tower house contains a water tank, two practice carillons, the old chimes playing console, office space for the Yale University Guild of Carillonneurs, and a memorial chapel. The tower contains the Yale Memorial Carillon, ten carillon bells installed in 1922. It

is a transposing instrument; the C bell sounds a concert B. The instrument is played by members of a student-run group set up for the purpose, the Yale Guild of Carillonneurs, and selected guest carillonneurs. During the school year, the instrument is played twice per day: a half-hour session at 12:30 p.m. and a one-hour session at 5:30 p.m.

Greg pleaded for his life. “P... p... please, I wo... won’t write anything else.”

“They do not like to be in the limelight. They survive in the shadows.”

As Greg was being dragged against his will up the steel spiral staircase to the top of Harkness Tower, the carillon player could be heard tuning his organ in preparation for his 5:30 performance. The sound of the euphonic bells increased in intensity, intensifying Greg’s every move, as they rose higher and higher. To Greg it seemed all too surreal.

As the assailant paused to catch his breath near the window just above the clockface on the west side of Harkness Tower, Greg grabbed, with the little strength he had left, the chilly steel railing to his left. It was a fruitless attempt to stop his impending doom. Impatient to continue, his assailant brutally peeled back his clutched fingers one by one. Reaching for the back of his collar, he

continued to drag Greg every inch of the way to the top of the Tower. Greg, fatigued from fighting to break free most of their ascent, now could barely resist the strength of his assailant.

“They want to be sure you don’t write anything else. You have rustled the feathers of a few high-up government officials. And that my friend, is a death sentence.”

“Please, please!” Greg was sobbing uncontrollably, knowing his demise was inevitable. And just like that, his life was over.

Now that the carillonneur finished the tuning of the bells, the carillon bells could be heard across campus, amplifying the melodious tune of *Clair de Lune* by Debussy.

“Maize, glad to see you are on time. You can hear the bells all over campus. You are going to enjoy this.”

Just as Scott took Maize’s arm to enter Harkness Tower, they heard a loud thump directly behind them.

They turned towards the noise. Someone had jumped from the top of the Tower.

Maize froze in horror as she was fixated on the unrecognizable, maimed, bloody body lying face down right in front of her.