

Twenty.

The Daniel headquarters for the assault on the zoocamp was an abandoned mansion house set in its own grounds some way to the west. These grounds had once been tended by a small army of gardeners, for there were greenhouses still to be seen, along with a walled orchard, rockeries, ponds and paved paths leading to a stables block, and a porter's lodge beside the principal entrance-gate. But all had fallen into ruin in the two and a half years of the Protectorate.

A merchant had had the mansion built in the late nineteenth century, from his profits in the sugar and shipping trades, and it was his grandson and family who had been living there at the time of the invasion. Within weeks, the business was requisitioned, for this was a convenient way of funding the operation of the regional Militia in these early days of political stabilisation. Then punitive fines were levied on the family, followed by the imposition of compulsory loans and the confiscation of valuable material property such as horses, motor cars, jewels and paintings. Three farms in west Lothian were also confiscated, while a small sporting estate on the north-west coast was taken as part of a programme to establish in the region a gigantic hunting preserve for the leading members of the new administration.

By that first autumn, as a result, the family was reduced to living in the garret and troopers from the newly-formed Specials and Paramilitaries were billeted in the grand reception rooms, the library and billiards hall, below. About Christmas time the head of the family was arrested at work: it was not until weeks later that his family heard that he had been sentenced to five years for

commercial wrecking and espionage, without right of correspondence. As the household was now without visible means of support, it was deemed in law to be parasitical in nature and social identity, and the children were shortly taken into the care of the state, that they might escape the malign influence of their mother's social class and loyalties. The mother then drowned herself in the Water of Leith: or at least that is where her body was found, and speculation was not safe for those who might otherwise have cared to wonder precisely how she had come to be there. In any case, there was an enquiry - as there always is in such cases - and it found that this had been a clear case of suicide without discernible cause or reason.

Soon afterwards the troopers billeted in the mansion moved elsewhere in the city: but not before they had smashed the greenhouses and their heating system, drained the ponds and set fire to the porter's lodge. They also levelled the rockeries, cut down the trees in the orchard and shot the one remaining horse in the stables block. Finally, on the morning of their departure, they laid mines throughout the grounds in the cause of ensuring that the property would in future remain as empty as they had left it.

And it did; until the Daniel underground found it, discovered a way through the mines, lifted a number of them, and made parts of the house habitable again - or as habitable as was needed for their particular purposes.

When Kelso Lamont arrived from Leith with the Daniel chaplain Mark, it was in the last hour before daybreak and birds were beginning to sing across the side of hill on which the mansion lay. Mark quoted Job -

Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days,

and caused the dayspring to know his place;
that it might take hold of the ends of the earth,
that the wicked might be shaken out of it?

- with a great sense of satisfaction, and added that Kelso should follow him through the remaining mines very carefully indeed; for otherwise, a misplaced mine might well cause the dayspring to know its place, and the wicked would certainly be shaken out of it!

Six young Daniels were already in the garrets of the mansion, with a commanding view across the city to the Pentland hills in the distance. On the edge of vision, the observation balloon over the zoocamp could be seen in a break in the cloud. In one corner of the room there was a military transceiver to which a radio operator was listening on headphones with immense care. It was powered by a bank of batteries, cycle-charged. In the opposite corner was a blackboard, and a map of the city pinned on the wall.

Mark said, 'Militia transmissions. We can cover the whole city from here'.

'I have used one of these', Kelso said. 'If they start to look for illegal transmissions, they will soon find us'.

Mark said, 'We have one of our people in their central transmission room. So we always know in advance. It means we can transmit in safety'.

Just after daylight the first of what Mark called his divisional officers arrived, flitting through the little minefield with practised ease and absolute fearlessness. Then two more; and shortly afterwards, a final pair. Mark introduced each in turn: one was liaison for the Daniel network in the east of the city, and a second for the same sort of network operating in the west of the city. Each of the remaining three would lead diversionary attacks to allow the main

attack a greater chance of success. Someone brought hot coffee from one of the great rooms below, while the liaison people gazed towards the Pentlands with studied indifference. They ignored Kelso with the conviction of absolute faith.

Mark removed his fur-lined Militia jerkin; the sickle still hung at his waist. He might easily have been back on the field of war, while someone briefed the battalion officers on an imminent action, and Mark prepared to minister to their souls in the aftermath.

He said, 'Right, this is the target'.

Suddenly, the radio operator removed her earphones and turned.

She said, 'That's a small group leaving the North British now. In a railway van. Your American woman is with them'.

The operator replaced her headphones, fine-tuned a dial, and listened more intently than ever.

'Right', Mark said, 'this is our target for tonight'.

The Daniel chaplain sketched on the blackboard the irregular outline of the zoocamp. A twenty-five foot stone wall had been built round it by experienced stone-work prisoners who had been brought-in from a special Militia construction project somewhere in the north of England. The wall was topped with wire, though this wire was not in good condition, and was not complete.

Mark said, 'We have surveyed it three times. We think we could get people over and down the other side without trouble. Except for the watchtowers and the dogs, of course'.

Inside the stone wall there was a wire fence, set nine feet back from the wall. Between them, a dozen dogs were free to run at any time during the day, and their number was doubled during the night. There were also the watchtowers: four of them, each forty feet high,

on a timber trellis column, with searchlights and machine-guns watching the walls all day and all night. And on each side of the walled prison there was a secondary service entrance, the western gate leading to the accommodation for Militia staff and camp visitors, and the eastern gate leading to the Specials' accommodation. Each was guarded round the clock, while the main entrance on Corstorphine Road was very heavily guarded, with gates, concrete blocks, a special unit of dogs, and two tanks dug into the earth and directly facing out into the street.

'From the top', Mark said, 'generator house and stores. Then the observation balloon tethered to an electric winch. In the top right, the communications hut and the magazine. Then the Militia huts, for officers and men, the same for the Specials on the other side, and in between the punishment isolation cells and the interrogations office'.

The zoocamp had long been emptied of animals, of course. There had been rumours of atrocity in the early days, and the authorities had stepped in and put an end to it. But some of the buildings had been kept: right in the middle of the camp, a high wire compound had been pressed into service as an open-air cage, in which troublesome prisoners were often kept overnight in winter. To the western side of this were the huts housing suspected Daniel prisoners, and to the east were the huts for other-category detainees. Towards the main gate were the dog-kennels and the administration block, from which prisoner records and transfers were organised. Beside this administration block was the camp's little hospital and its solitary doctor.

Mark's blue and innocent eyes smiled round the company. He said, 'If we have time, I hope you leave him for me. This is the man

who questioned my daughter when they took her into the camp. We have never seen her since, and I want to meet this man. In her memory’.

Kelso looked across the southern part of the city. The Pentlands had disappeared in a bank of snow cloud. Towards the zoocamp the observation balloon had also disappeared in thick cloud. The radio operator took off her headphones again and yawned. Perhaps it was the end of her shift.

She said, ‘They have arrived at Haymarket. Their van has been shunted into a siding. The line must be cut’.

‘We put in an attack an hour ago’, Mark said. ‘On the line to the west, near Murrayfield. So that they cannot bring in reinforcements from the west tonight. Anyone they have in Haymarket, they will now take to the zoocamp’.

‘What if they don’t?’, Kelso said.

The chaplain shrugged. If the Militia did not bring his friend to the camp, then she could not be rescued. It was as simple as that.

He said, ‘But we will know when she is on her way. We have someone in the station who watches these things for us’.

It had begun to snow heavily in the mansion’s grounds, and Mark said they would break for half an hour. The young operator offered to show Kelso round the house.

‘Don’t worry about your friend’, she said, ‘they will take her to the camp and we will get her out tonight’.

The girl sounded supremely confident. She led the way down into the building with great familiarity. She said it was dangerous in the grounds because of the mines. None of the local children dared come near the place. There had been a bad accident once, and after that they stopped coming.

‘This is the library’, she said, ‘at least it used to be’.

Stacks were tumbled, and paintings slashed. The soft furniture had been ripped apart, and the timber dismembered.

She said, ‘This is where I last saw my father’.

‘This was your house?’, Kelso said.

‘Someday, I will have revenge on them’, the girl said.

Kelso asked how she came to be back in her family home with the Daniels. She said they had taken her and her brothers away not long after her father had been arrested. But she would not talk about the time in their custody.

She said, very simply, ‘I escaped. I think I am the only one of them alive now’.

When she turned to Kelso, her eyes in the pale winter daylight were cold and entirely without mercy, almost without sentience. She had been branded on the forehead with the mathematical symbol for addition. Or perhaps it was a cross. When she saw Kelso notice the brand, she smiled very proudly.

‘It is nothing’, she said. ‘They did far worse to other people. And they will pay for it. ÔYou have been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and the Persians’. This is what we will do to them’.

‘And if they win?’, Kelso said.

‘Then we will be defeated’, she said with radiant certainty. ‘But it does not matter, because someday we will win’.

They returned to the garret. Mark cautioned complete silence. The new radio operator was sending a coded three-letter signal to the Daniel units on standby outside the city.

Mark said, 'That is to tell them that the decision has been made. We can't go back now. This afternoon, they will come into the city and move to their attack positions'.

Some of the earlier Daniels had gone, but a number of others had arrived. This time, there were no introductions. A spirit of tense expectancy filled the little room. One of the newcomers ran through the resources of personnel and arms available to the attack. There was a unit of fifty good brothers and sisters in Dalkeith, almost in the shadow of the feared Militia divisional headquarters there. It was as certain as anything could be that they had received the signal to move up into the city later in the day. They would bring small arms from their own armoury, and proceed into the city by their own transport. Six times they had practised the move, and six times it had gone without any problem. Barring some sort of accident, they would be in position by ten o'clock.

There was a second unit, also fifty strong, towards Linlithgow, mainly drawn from outlaw farming elements who for months past had been living rough in the bleak winter countryside there. They had already had their weapons smuggled into the city that morning, in loads of food headed for one or other of the street-markets served from the west of Edinburgh.

And a third unit was assembled towards Colinton. In its ranks were a number of Daniel outlaws who had come from England. Some of these had extensive military experience with mortars and flame-throwers. It was expected that they would travel in plain clothes by commandeered bus. They would then assemble at a safe house somewhere in the city, before making their final preparations, receiving their final orders, and moving to the attack position at eleven o'clock.

The Daniel quartermaster at Barnton had already reported that all was ready. He had assembled a dozen truck-axle mortars, with materials stolen from the Specials motor repair-shop at Powderhall. He was in possession of a pair of flame-throwers, which had been captured three days earlier by a Daniel unit in Perthshire, and smuggled into the city. The quartermaster had also acquired three heavy machine guns, and expected to have by late afternoon vehicles able to mount them and carry them into the attack. He hoped, even, by late evening to have in his temporary possession a pair of Militia or Specials armoured cars: though their absence from the depot would become apparent by six o'clock the following morning.

And in Granton two bomb-trucks had been prepared for the diversionary attack on the main gate and one side gate of the zoocamp just before the main assault went in. Some of the Daniel sympathisers in the north-east fishing ports had carried explosives down by sea and unloaded them at the harbour concealed in bins of cod and ice. Once there, it had been an easy matter to smuggle the explosives elsewhere in the city.

Someone asked whether the recent disturbances in the city would affect the operation. For nights past, there had been running battles with mounted police in the High Street and surrounding wynds and alleys. And there had been continuing trouble all the previous day around the Meadows and in the university district.

But Mark said with authority that this would make their task easier, for the attention of the Militia and its sister agencies would be directed towards control of these secular disturbances, allowing the work of the Daniels to go ahead without obstacle.

The Daniels intelligence officer was called to make his report. This was an older man, small and broad, and wearing an oversize clerical collar. He too sported hair that hung to his shoulders. And he too had a distinctive bearing, as if he had seen military service in the recent past.

He said, 'We have three classes of information on the camp. Some of you might remember it before the Protectorate. That's all gone now. Or almost all of it. There is nothing you will recognise'.

There had been no known escapes, ever, from the zoocamp, and for that reason they had been unable to trace and speak to anyone who had managed to break out. But a handful of previous detainees had been traced to other camps to which they had later been moved. And Daniels already in these camps and prisons had been able to speak to them, sometimes at length. But they had a more immediate source of information on the workings of the zoocamp to draw on.

'As some of you know', he said with a thin smile, 'we captured one of the guard-staff in the city-centre. We took him to Leith and questioned him last night. Those of you who were there will know that we had to handle him roughly. But no worse than they have handled our people'.

It had taken some time and effort to get this Militia officer to co-operate fully, for he was something of an expert in interrogation practices, having learned his trade in the London area prior to being sent north. So he knew, perhaps, what was to come. Still, he had survived a session with the medieval boot, though it had been heated to a high temperature. And they had broken his hands with the thumbkins, repeatedly applied them till he had begged for mercy.

Then they had brought him to the wedges, and had begun to crack open his knee-joints and ankles and leg-bones.

‘That brought him to his senses’, the old man said.

After that, the Militia expert had begun to talk rather a lot about the internal organisation of the camp. There was no more than fifty Militia troopers there, and a similar number of Specials. Most of the Specials were trainees, and were not armed except by specific permission of the commanding officer. And on any one night, one half of these trainees were on night-pass leave, and not back at the main entrance until two in the morning. The commanding officer was often drunk late in the evening and had a mistress in Mayfield. He went there a lot, usually in the evening, and sometimes even spent whole nights with her in the North British hotel. His second in command had already reported him to the Militia’s own security service but nothing had happened.

One of the Daniels asked how the commanding officer got to Mayfield. The old man said that he was picked up by a Militia armoured car, and taken back by one. He never used his own official car for social purposes. It was an armoured, dark-green Daimler, which was kept at the guard-house close by the main gate.

‘The guard shifts change every eight hours’, the intelligence officer said. ‘At midnight, at eight in the morning and at four in the afternoon. After midnight, though they double the dogs, they halve the guard staff in the watchtowers and at the entrance gates. New arrivals are kept in the open-air compound unless they are very ill. Then, they put them in the hospital for the night’.

There was a new punishment block, the Militia officer had told them. It was underground, and absolutely without any natural or electric light. The prisoners were fed once a day. Interrogation

sessions never started until two in the morning - but of course, they could go on for days afterwards.

The old man looked round his little audience, as if asking for further questions. From the high garret window, Kelso watched a pair of aircraft fly very low across the south side of the city, heading east. For a moment, a trick of the wind brought to him the sound of their engines.

Someone asked with clinical disinterest what had happened to the Militia officer when he had answered all the questions they had put to them. Mark laughed and said that that was all they had got out of the man. He had died of shock not long after they had wedged his ankles. There were no further questions.

The radio operator looked up into the company. He said he had been getting coded transmissions for the last ten minutes, among the plain-speech ones.

He said, 'It's a new code. I don't recognise it all. On the standard Militia frequency. Very short messages'.

But the old intelligence officer laughed at this.

He said, 'It's nothing to worry about. These are completely unofficial. There's a counterfeit currency ring operating among the senior officers in the the central city division. Some people say they deal with drugs too. Perhaps they are expecting a shipment'.

The meeting was coming to a close. By now, it was snowing heavily. A great peace seemed to have settled over the city. From the window of the Daniels' garret, the surrounding walls of the mansion and the wrecked lodge at the entrance gate could no longer be seen. Someone brought coffee from below, and a murmur of conversation ran round the garret. There was no sense of urgency, no sense of danger. Young Daniels roamed the lower

rooms of the mansion, ready to die in its defence. Daniel lookouts were also posted throughout the district, and all main roads in the west of the city were under surveillance. And of course the heavy snow would make the movement of Militia motorised units difficult and hazardous.

The radio operator laid down his headphones, and passed them over to the young girl who had originally listened to the Militia traffic. Someone suggested that they all listen to the transmissions for a time. The girl pulled the headphones, and at once clear speech traffic was heard.

The girl said, 'That's low security stuff'.

From the traffic, it sounded as if the Paramilitary controllers were trying to move units out of the city towards the west. But the rail line was down for at least another two hours, and the roads were closed with snowdrifts. The only snowploughs were in the hands of the Militia, and they were keeping them for inner-city operations. The girl whirled her dials expertly and a torrent of morse poured from the machine.

'This stuff is clear', she said, and listened intently. With immense precision, she took a shorthand note of the morse, and read it back.

'That's Dalkeith', she said. 'Talking to the North British. They have a batch of prisoners to take up. But they will keep them till tomorrow because of the snow. Nothing else, all routine in Dalkeith'.

Again, she tuned the machine, searching for a frequency. One of the young Daniels from down in the bowels of the mansion brought yet more coffee, and a small bottle of black rum. Most of the senior Daniels refused the liquor, but the old intelligence officer

demanded a shot, and urged Kelso to take a shot too. For the cold, the old man said jauntily, it would be a long and cold night to come.

The girl had found another frequency. The Militia's security status for Edinburgh was low. There had been an attack on the rail line at Murrayfield in the morning; no more attacks were expected. The situation in Glasgow was serious. It was likely that reinforcements would be called for overnight. And then another frequency.

'This is the guard-unit on the Forth bridge', the girl said.

At once a strong male voice could be heard, transmitting from the south end of the bridge. The snow was extremely thick now. They could see nothing of the Fife shore. They had lost all sight of the road-transport ferries too. They had allowed a train onto the bridge forty minutes earlier. A combined troop and armoured train, loaded with Paramilitaries and Fraternalists and light tanks. It had gone out onto the bridge very slowly, and disappeared almost at once in the snowstorm. Not long afterwards there had been a gigantic explosion towards the far end of the bridge, they had all seen the flash of light for a second through the snow.

'We didn't see anything else after that', the unknown voice said into the ether. 'But there was a series of smaller explosions which went on for ten minutes. We should have heard by now from the guard unit at the north end of the bridge. But we have heard nothing. They are not responding to our messages. Should I send some men over the bridge? The snow is very thick. I am standing by for instructions'.

With a spirit of great joy, the old intelligence officer asked for more rum, and said, 'The bastards! Some of the Fife miners have got the north end of the bridge. And not before time!'

He offered a fifty tin of Capstan around the company, but only he and Kelso took a cigarette. Mark called the meeting to order again. He would run through the plan of attack for the night and then they would all vacate the mansion except for the radio operators and runners. The attack would start at midnight. Diversionary attacks would start at ten, on the Militia camps at Portobello and Queensferry. With luck, these might draw away troopers from the zoocamp. There would also be a further attack on the rail line at Murrayfield.

At eleven thirty, a truck bomb would be detonated at the main gate and at the western side entrance of the camp. Simultaneously units of young Daniels, who had been in training for some weeks, would attack the two northern watchtowers. Casualties would be very heavy but it was imperative that these towers were out of action by midnight. If the youngsters failed in this endeavour, then the whole attack would be fatally compromised. At midnight, a signal would be given by parachute flare that the attack should begin. In the event of heavy snow, this signal might be obscured in its entirety. A sound signal would therefore replace it. The Daniels involved in the attack would have no difficulty in recognising this sound signal. For weeks past, and under cover of darkness, a special unit had been mining, and laying explosives under, the north wall of the camp.

When it was blown apart, Mark would lead a column of Daniel fighters through the breach. They would fight their way downhill into the western half of the camp. A second column led by Kelso would attack the eastern side-gate, and destroy as quickly as possible the communications centre and magazine. Both units would then search for the prisoners they wanted, and withdraw from the camp:

but not before they had destroyed as much of it as they were able to. Each column would be supported by mortars and flamethrowers, and motorised machine-guns. It was possible that they might also dispose of the services of a pair of Militia armoured cars. It was expected that these would be stolen from the motor-repair workshops at the Militia's central-services depot, in the grounds of a former school in Polwarth, sometime during the evening.

There were no questions and that concluded the briefing. Mark led the little meeting in prayers and a modest homily. He took as his text Amos, 5.9:

He flashes destruction on the stronghold
and brings the fortified city to ruin.

Perhaps it seemed appropriate. Then the meeting broke up. Two radio operators and a runner would remain in the mansion until further notice; everyone else would return to their units until it was time to move towards the target.

Mark and Kelso made their way through the mines and came out into the thoroughfares of the city. In the side streets, there was no traffic at all. The snow was very deep. Some buses and Militia traffic crawled in Corstorphine Road, and an armoured Paramilitary snow-plough was heading into the city, hurling slush on the pavements.

'It will be dark in an hour', Kelso said.

Mark said, 'We have a house waiting for us. We can stay there until it is time'.

The house was a red sandstone doctor's residence and surgery in Clermiston. It looked strangely pretty in the snow, and lights were already burning in the lower rooms. A recruiting poster in a window called on citizens to volunteer for part-time service in

the Specials. Good wages and other benefits were offered to all who were accepted. A family car was parked in the driveway, and a slow trickle of patients trudged their way to a side-door marked reception.

‘A sympathiser?’, Kelso asked.

‘We have people we can use everywhere’, Mark said.

The doctor’s wife took the men to a parlour in the back of the house. It was very warm after the mansion. Someone had been attempting the Scotsman crossword. Only one word had not been completed. The clue was Fabian thicket, four letters. The wife had food waiting and served it to them at once. A uniform jacket in the colours of the Specials lay across the back of a chair.

She said, ‘He will be finished surgery soon. A lot of the older patients aren’t getting enough food. Some of them won’t last if this cold weather continues’.

When the doctor had finished his work, he came to meet his visitors.

To his wife he said, ‘Isn’t it time you went? You will have to walk in this snow’.

When the woman had gone, the doctor explained that she had volunteered as a part-time Special. The training-course only lasted six weeks and the families of volunteers enjoyed ration-card and fuel benefits which could not be ignored.

He said, in a kindly tone, ‘That’s the way they do it, you see. Bit by bit, they crush serious opposition and make it easier for everyone else to collaborate with them. Most people who have any property at all do collaborate eventually. They can’t control the poor of course, they have nothing to lose’.

The doctor suggested that they might have a drink, and they moved to a room at the front of the house. It was richly furnished, and a generous fire was burning. Photographs of young boys decorated the walls. A mahogany radio set occupied much of a table top. A full set of golf-clubs occupied pride of place in a corner. The host poured generous whiskies from a decanter; he said it did not need water to go with it. The powerful aroma of peat swirled in the firelight.

Suddenly Kelso said, 'Shaw'.

'Fabian thicket!', the doctor exclaimed with joy, 'it couldn't be anything else, could it?'

'Are they your sons?', Kelso asked.

They were at school in Perthshire, the doctor said proudly. If the authorities closed the boarding-schools, there would be serious trouble with the middle-classes.

'But it's getting harder and harder to get children into good schools now', he said. 'There is a quota on places, and half of them have to go to Protectorate employees. We were lucky to get our boys in at all'.

At six o'clock they listened to the radio news. Bandits in Fife had attacked an armoured train with six hundred Militia troopers aboard. The attack had taken place at the north end of the rail bridge over the Forth. The last section of the bridge had been brought down with explosive charges, and the train had plunged off the track. State forces from throughout Fife had cornered the bandits, and were expected to destroy them by midnight. A simultaneous attack had been thwarted on the Tay rail bridge, and search and destroy units of the Militia and Auxiliaries were at work in

Dundee. All part-time members of the Specials had been ordered to report at once to their district headquarters for further instructions.

‘Good God’, the doctor said, ‘I hope that doesn’t apply to trainees as well’.

Kelso said, ‘They burned a village in Fife, didn’t they?’

‘I am afraid that is the way it is’, the doctor said. ‘If you co-operate and don’t cause trouble then trouble won’t come to you. Most people learn it in time’.

He wanted to talk about golf, which was clearly his passion. Most of the city courses were still open and were busy at the weekends. Membership lists had closed in the early days of the Protectorate and had not re-opened. A lot of the sort of people who would once have been in work were no longer in work, and no club wanted the unemployed in its ranks. And of course no club could risk taking into membership anyone who might be tainted by the suspicion of blood-relations with any sort of criminal record, far less any sort of detention in one of the camps. It was this sort of exclusivity which had persuaded the government that these clubs were bulwarks of the existing social order, rather than nests of sedition.

‘Of course they are awash with informers’, the doctor said, ‘you have to be very careful. But it’s extraordinary what you hear if you keep your ears open. And your mouth closed’.

He offered more whisky - his wife would be at least two hours at her training session - but Kelso said it would be better to snatch a little sleep. Even two hours would be helpful. The chaplain Mark said this was a good idea, and the doctor left them at the fire to sleep. Never once did he ask where they had come from or where they were going. It was not safe to know such things, of course: so

he took the decanter of whisky with him, and left the visitors to sleep.

When he woke them, he said it would soon be nine o'clock. He smelt heavily of powerful whisky fumes. Perhaps he had trouble with his nerves and the whisky calmed them. Or perhaps he merely liked the taste, of course. Either explanation was plausible. The men thanked him for the refuge he had offered from the cold; the doctor wished them very good luck; and they left.

Kelso said, 'He is doing well anyway'.

'He is the best abortion doctor in the city', Mark said primly. 'The Militia use him a lot'.

'Do you trust him?', Kelso asked.

The Daniel chaplain said briskly, 'We blackmail him. And sometimes we give him the morphine we have stolen. Of course he sells it. And of course we trust him'.

'We'll walk', Mark said. 'We have no choice. And it's safer. When the curfew starts, the street lights will go out. Any Militia will be in armoured cars. We will hear them coming. It's completely safe'.

They returned to the mansion. Brother Mark made it clear on the way that his Daniels were strict moderates, good presbyterians. They had nothing in common with the unitarian and radical rabbles that teemed south of the Border. But even his moderates were prepared to contest with arms the imposition of any archbishop on the Scottish church. Or any damned bishops, either.

He said, 'The Covenanters did it before, and we can do it again'.

A lookout took them through the grounds with very great care. The interior of the building was in total darkness. In the radio room

under the eaves, the girl who had operated the equipment earlier was back on duty. The elderly intelligence officer had also returned. He too smelt strongly of whisky. A dim oil lamp gave some light, and even a tiny suggestion of heat.

The girl said, 'The attacks are under way at Queensferry and Portobello. We don't know what is happening yet. They have been rushing reinforcements to Queensferry all afternoon. Since the attack on the bridge. And we have also cut the line again at Murrinaryfield'.

Kelso said, 'What about the prisoner column from Haymarket?'.

The girl said they had an informer among the station staff. An elderly porter who reported everything he saw. The prisoners had been marched earlier to the zoocamp with a Militia armoured car at the head and the tail of the column.

And then she said, 'Your friend was with them. Our people have made contact with her, and they will look after her'.

'When did you last see your friend?', Mark asked.

'During the war'.

'Fate parts friends', Mark said, 'and sometimes it brings them back to each other. With faith anything is possible'.

He made it sound as if he enjoyed absolute faith in possibility. From the garret window the old intelligence officer said, 'That's curfew. All the lights are down. And I think it has stopped snowing'.

They waited for an hour and there was no radio traffic to dissuade them from the attack. Mark said it did not matter anyway. They were committed to the attack on the zoocamp and it would go ahead as planned. Everyone would be ready at their assembly stations in the darkened woods to the north of it.

The Daniels were mustered at two points. One group was gathered in the woods to the north of one of the principal thoroughfares which ran towards Queensferry. A second had collected in the walled and wooded grounds of a former hospital. It was very quickly apparent that the third group from Dalkieth had not arrived. Perhaps their luck had run out at last. Mark studied his watch with immense care. The truck bombs would be driven to their places at ten minutes to the hour. They would be detonated at once by their drivers. Minutes later the young Daniels chosen to attack the watchtowers would go into action. These little units were then sent off, that they might move into position. The quartermaster had brought mortars, but no flamethrowers. There were three medium machine-guns. And he swore that before the main attack began, he would have a pair of Militia armoured cars available.

‘What is your friend’s name?’, Mark asked.

‘Kelly’, Kelso said, ‘Kelly Barton’.

‘If she is here, we will get her’, Mark said.

Mark took command of the unit from the south west of the city, and Kelso took charge of the unit which had come in from the farming country to the west. Then each moved off, to take up position. The roads were still deep in snow and entirely free of traffic. As they moved into the trees, someone said they had heard a Militia armoured car approaching; but nobody could be sure of this. For what seemed an immensity of time, they lay concealed and motionless outside the zoocamp. The sky had cleared, and stars could be seen. The watchtowers were plainly visible too, their searchlights playing over the camp within the walls.

From the other side of the camp, there was a shattering explosion. Moments later, there was second. For a second or

more, the silence was almost as oppressive. Then there seemed to be fighting under way at the top of the two watchtowers: a searchlight pointed straight into the sky, and small-arms fire could be heard.

Somebody said urgently, 'Wait for the signal, wait for it!'

A third hideous explosion rocked the night: the pressure wave rolled through the woods, and the sound rolled on over the city, as the mines below the walls of the camp were detonated.

The same voice said, 'That's the back wall open. Any moment now'.

A pair of Militia armoured cars was racing to the site of the explosion. From the command-hatch of the first, a young Daniel girl with long blonde hair blowing in the night was screaming with rage and defiance. Then a signal rocket soared into the winter sky, trailing sparks like some miniature comet. Hundreds of voices were howling the battlecry of Mene Mene Tekel Parsin: and the Daniel attack on the zoomcamp was under way at last.