



*Inspired By A True Story*

# ISAAC

ROBERT KARMON

*A coming-of-age story of miraculous survival, love, friendship and courage.*

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

# CHAPTER ONE

## SIX KILOS

When Isaac came home from school and saw that the mill-stones had stopped turning, he knew the war had finally come to Rovno. Three months before, on July 21st, Germany had invaded Russian territory and plunged Eastern Poland into combat. But until this final week of September 1941, Rovno had been spared the scars of battle.

In the house, his father acted nonchalant, convinced that the situation was only temporary. Tanning and curing would resume once the workers returned, but for now, with the Germans pushing towards the town, everyone had fled.

For the next few days, the family went about their business tensely; Hindle and Aunt Rifka baked bread, pumped water in reserve, cleaned and aired the blankets and linens; while at night, Lazar and Isaac sat looking at old album pictures. A picture of Lazar in his old Russian uniform provoked a mixture of pride and laughter in Lazar, but Isaac, only sixteen, saw in the youthful romantic features of his young father the sketchy outline of his own face. While father and son rummaged through yellowing photos, the women slept, to awaken before sunrise and begin cleaning and cooking all over again.

After a week, Lazar broke the tension of the family, as they waited each day for the war to arrive. He stood up at the dinner table and declared, "We have nothing to worry about. What can happen? If they take away our tanning plant, we still have our lands, we will have our house; if they seize our house, I've hidden enough money away by the well and in the stone fence to keep us secure in some other country; and if they find the money and take our possessions, we are still a family and we can start over."

Aunt Rifka, nervous and unsure, broke out suddenly in tears and ran from the room. Hindle kissed her husband proudly and Isaac marveled at his father's spirit and courage.

The next morning, the roar of planes could be heard. Later, the whine and grind of tanks echoed in the distance to the south. Then Isaac heard the snort of gunfire for the first time, machine guns crackling like wet wood in a roaring hearth, and soon spumes of flame and ashy funnels of smoke could be seen rising above the western horizon.

By night, the western sky glowed like red embers, and the sound of planes overhead increased, with the thud and rumble of falling bombs felt underneath the ground.

For the next few days, while Russian troops and German divisions fought on the outskirts of town, Isaac could see crowds of townspeople escaping in the distance, along the Narew Road toward Kiev. It was reported that the fighting grew so fierce, it spilled out into the streets of Rovno itself, with both sides advancing and retreating from hour to hour. Rovno was on the road to Moscow and Warsaw, and both armies wanted control.

From the window of the house, the war still seemed a fiery canvas in the distance, but the constant rumble of falling artillery shells and bombs grew stronger, the whine of tanks louder.

Then suddenly it all stopped. It was the beginning of October and the fighting had gone on for a week, but suddenly there was silence, except for a distant crackle of gunfire.

No workers returned, the millstone remained still, but Lazar was convinced it was over, so he started to tour his plant once again, checking machinery, looking for damage.

By the second day of this new tranquility, the radio returned to the air, with a German announcer declaring victory of the elite Nazi divisions and proclaiming the Polish people safe from Bolshevik oppression forever.

The following day, Sol felt it was safe enough to return to his clinic and resume his work. Isaac was allowed to accompany his brother and help in any way he could.

Approaching Skolynia Road leading to the clinic and the heart of Rovno, Isaac could see the remnants of battle: charred foundations, collapsed roofs, gaping bomb craters and smoking rubble but the town still remained, for the most part, recognizable and untouched.

Even Sol's clinic had been spared, and already the patients were waiting, casualties of war. They huddled and crouched by the entrance and up the stairs leading to the front door, wretched figures in blood-spattered rags or shivering beneath muddy blankets. Sol quickly opened the door and, with Lyuba's and Isaac's help, the clinic was soon warm and bright, the staff ministering to the wounded.

During a lull, Lyuba sent Isaac upstairs into the library to rest and eat some stew she had warmed up from the night before. Once again, entering the second floor library, Isaac felt renewed confidence and security. From the window, he looked out over unusually empty streets and just beyond, towards the surrounding hills where puffs of ashy smoke still rose in the air.

Settling back, Isaac began looking for a new book, a new text. As he was looking, he heard a commotion downstairs in the hallway. He went to the door, opened it slightly and peered down the stairs through the crack. From his vantage point, he could see a German officer in a black uniform with leather straps and a tan cap. The officer was gesturing angrily at Lyuba, ordering in German that the patients be removed from the clinic. Since Isaac understood German perfectly, along with five other languages, he had no difficulty following the exchange.

Lyuba looked shocked, frightened, but was reluctant to follow the officer's command. Then the officer, with a name like Bingel or Bichel, slapped his leather gloves sharply in his palm and shouted out an order to his soldiers waiting outside. More soldiers appeared and began to herd the patients out of the hallway, shoving them rudely off the benches with the butt of their guns. At that point, Lyuba ran to get Sol. He emerged, outraged and indignant.

"You have no authority to do such a thing!" Sol's voice was high pitched, intense.

The officer looked at the thin, handsome face of the doctor, still dressed in his white jacket. "I am the only authority, pig!"

But Sol was not listening. Instead, he tried to stop the soldier from shoving a woman out the door. She looked befuddled and unsteady, her one arm wrapped in a blood-soaked linen, her face sallow from the loss of blood.

"Get your hands off her. She is in shock, don't you see?"

But as Sol tried to grab the soldier and pull him away, the officer stepped in and

slapped Sol across the face, so hard it drove him back against the bench. Isaac had never seen his brother treated with anything but reverence and respect. The physical assault on him seemed unreal, like an episode from some fictional tale.

Sol rubbed his face, straightened up, and held his temper. "I insist that I be allowed to carry out my medical duties."

The German officer, a Commandant in Einsatzgruppen C, laughed. "He insists. Do you hear that?" The soldiers laughed in turn, savage, raucous laughter.

The Commandant continued. "Now I will tell you what you must do. Some of my troops need immediate transfusions. We will round up the youngest children and you will draw blood from them to supply my wounded."

Sol looked at him grimly. "Children? You want me to take blood from the children?"

"From infants, if possible! I don't want to weaken the able-bodied men in town. We will need them immediately, so infants and children will do."

"I cannot take blood from babies. It would kill them. Let me find you healthy young volunteers. I will gladly treat your men."

"You will not touch my soldiers. A German doctor will care for the German wounded. Your job will be with the babies here, collecting blood."

Sol shook his head, desperate and exasperated. "I cannot. I won't kill some child."

"You cannot?" The Commandant shouted at him. Lyuba moved closer to her husband, taking his arm firmly, protectively. She was frightened. Isaac could see that in her eyes.

"One last time, pig. I order you to take blood from the youngest volunteers we can find, infants if possible."

Sol looked down, paused, took Lyuba's hand and clutched it for support. "I want to help you and your men in whatever way I can, sir. But I am sure that your own doctors would not agree to such an order."

The Commandant stiffened. "You will not obey?"

"In all conscience," Sol started to explain almost tenderly and patiently, "I am first a doctor and could not ... "

Before he had finished his sentence, it happened. So quickly, Isaac did not have time to turn away, but watched intently. As Sol quietly explained his objections, the Commandant unsnapped his side holster, drew his revolver, aimed it directly at Sol's face and pulled the trigger. His motion was so fluid, so smooth and unhesitating, it looked as if he were only shaking Sol's hand or brushing a cinder off Sol's face. But the shot was real and Isaac could feel the echo of the bullet vibrate in the door he held ajar. Sol's head jerked backwards like it was all cloth and sawdust, and his whole body instantly collapsed into a heap.

At first Isaac did not associate the gunshot with his brother, nor did he connect the spray of blood on Lyuba's skirt or on the Commandant's uniform with Sol. Then Lyuba began to scream and she kneeled down at Sol's limb body, shaking him, pounding his shoulders.

While she cried out and struggled to shake life back into her husband's body, the Commandant signaled to one of the soldiers to remove both Sol and Lyuba. When the soldier grabbed Lyuba, she turned on him, punching and kicking. Another soldier came up and without a pause, slammed the butt of his rifle across the side of her head. The sound of the impact made Isaac turn. His stomach quivered in disgust, his whole body winced and revolted, but he dared not scream out. It was over, and both Lyuba and Sol were dragged away by their feet like empty sacks.

With a look of disgust, the Commandant shouted, "Burn this place. It's useless."

Still undetected, Isaac kneeled, holding back the scream of grief and horror. His body was shaking uncontrollably and his fingers were numb from gripping the door so fiercely. Part of him wanted to rush down and rescue his loved ones, but another part—the frightened and vigilant voice inside him—kept reminding him to run, to escape. With the sound of soldiers returning carrying pitch-tar torches, smashing windows, kicking down doors, Isaac erupted into action and ran to the back of the library where a small attic window promised escape. With his heart racing, he scrambled through the window and slid down the sloping back roof, kicking up shingles as he slid down. But no one heard him over the noise of the soldiers setting fire to the clinic.

On the ground Isaac began to run, not looking back or to the side, but instinctively toward home just as the sound of flames roared through the clinic. Isaac kept running, crying and screaming inside, but never once stopping to rest.

When he finally saw his house, he collapsed to his knees, breathless, and crawled the last few meters to the front door.

Hindle saw her son first, his clothes torn and soiled, his face streaked and sobbing, but when he finally quieted down and tried to explain what he had seen, he broke out in tears again, choking on his words, unable and unwilling to remember.

Even when he managed to piece the story together, it still didn't seem real. Hindle protested. "You are talking about German officers. Lazar, you spent a whole year with such soldiers. They are not monsters. This is not possible ... not possible."

She held Isaac close while Lazar wiped off his face with a wet cloth. Aunt Rifka had retreated into the darkness of the sitting room, frightened by Isaac's story. She started to pray to her late husband, crying to him in the dark. All that night following Sol's murder, Isaac and his family sat up in the main room, nodding off to sleep, then awakening suddenly with a start, afraid of what morning might bring. The stillness through the long night was broken only by uncontrollable sobbing, first by Isaac as his body shook off the nightmare, then Hindle, realizing her Sol was gone forever. And in the other room, Isaac's aunt could be heard, muttering to herself and praying to the shadowy corners.

With morning, Lazar went to the door and looked out. Across the road, he could see a long column of young men—some had been workers at his plant—carrying shovels and picks, led by Ukrainian police and SS officers. But Lazar hesitated to confront any of them, unsure of the soldiers or the police. Later that day, an older worker came to the door. He had been employed by Lazar for many years and felt a certain loyalty to the family. He seemed anxious to come inside before anyone saw him paying a visit to Lazar's home, but once inside the house, and with a glass of cider, he relaxed. From him, Lazar learned that the young men he'd seen this morning were on their way to the Sosenki region to dig anti-tank trenches against a possible counter-attack by the Bolsheviks. The trenches would take a week to complete and meanwhile, the Einsatzgruppen C commando force, sent by Himmler into this region, would attempt to relocate the almost 20,000 Jews to protect them from retaliation by local anti-Semitic groups. Without the protection of the Russian army, the Jews were in a vulnerable position, and the German high command planned to resettle the Jewish inhabitants in some location more easily

defended against such attacks.

Lazar listened with a certain amount of relief. At least the fighting was over and his family would remain together. When the worker left, he shook everyone's hand, kissed Hindle good-bye, and quickly departed.

For three days Isaac's family remained sequestered by choice in their house. Lazar had drawn all the curtains and he lit only the most necessary candles. Even with the Sukkoth festival approaching, Lazar felt reluctant to contact his other Jewish friends, and decided instead to wait out the events. For a week, no one else visited them for a week. Then, one day, there was a heavy knock on the kitchen door. When Hindle looked through the window, she saw her neighbor, the Polish fireman. She opened it gratefully and let him in.

"Are you leaving yet?"

Hindle looked at him. "We are not planning a trip."

"I heard from my cousin in town. He is in the new police battalion organized by the SS. All Jews will be traveling East for resettlement." The fireman spoke with a tone of self-satisfied pleasure. He seemed to be relishing all the gossip that was spreading.

"We haven't been informed."

Lazar stood by the kitchen entrance. He felt no desire to invite the fireman in. There was something about this visit that offended him.

"Eventually, my friends, eventually, the Nazis will take everything. The house, the furnishings, and give it away or store it or sell it. Look, my wife and I love that gilded mirror in the hallway and that painting of some kind of wildflowers in the study. We thought you'd rather give it to friends than have it go to strangers."

Hindle listened with increasing rage while Lazar calmly approached the fireman and crowded him toward the door. "We are not yet ready to leave. And we have no intentions of selling any of our possessions."

"Sell? You have no chance to sell any of this. You're lucky if you can give it away before the Nazis take it. I just thought you'd rather..."

Lazar opened the door, practically pushing the fireman out, gritting his teeth in anger as he spoke. "I thank you for your thoughtfulness. If we ever decide to give away some of our belongings, I'm sure we'll give you and your lovely wife first

consideration.”

The fireman grinned, reared back haughtily and snarled, “You’re fools. I give you a choice. Tomorrow you won’t have a choice. You’re not big shots anymore. You’re nothing. Nothing!”

And the door slammed forever on the face of their neighbor. Hindle sat down, shaking, apprehensive. Lazar laughed it off and went back into the darkened study to sit and take stock of his house and all it contained. These last few days had found him taking inventory, over and over, almost as if to reassure himself that it was still his house.

The next morning, everyone heard the sound of trucks and lorries and voices in the distance. Isaac looked out first and saw thousands of people walking on the Narew Road, carrying small suitcases or a child or both. They wore thick coats and were guarded on each side by Ukrainian police and German soldiers. All through the morning, people walked the distant road. It seemed to never end and Isaac would peer out from behind the curtains from hour to hour expecting to see the people gone. Instead, they grew in numbers.

But by late afternoon, it was obvious all of Rovno’s Jews were on the road, and columns of Jews would go by relentlessly through the day. Their voices were muted, just faint, distant murmurs, while an occasional military vehicle would crash by or some line of heavily laden trucks or lorries could be heard speeding alongside the endless procession.

Near evening, there was a knock on the door. Lazar stood, his body tense. The knock grew heavier. When he opened it, a German officer in a starched and spotless uniform entered, saluted with his arm upraised, his fist gripping leather gloves, and then quietly took Lazar aside. The family stood back in the corner of the main room, afraid to be seen. In a matter of minutes, the officer walked bristly out, saluting with an upraised arm once again, leaving Lazar to organize his family.

It was quite simple and precise. Just as the worker had warned, the Jewish population was to be resettled immediately in order to ensure their safety. Each Jewish member of the house-hold would be allowed to leave with no more than six kilos. Everything else must be left behind; but, Lazar had been promised, property and possessions would be protected until safe return.

“You were right, Hindle. They are not monsters. It sounds quite orderly and civilized to me.”

Hindle did not respond, but quickly went about her business. Lazar had been informed that the squad leader for their region would be coming by later that night to accompany them to their relocation point, and proper transportation would be provided. They had to be ready to travel in a few hours, standing outside with their six kilos.

Silently, almost with a certain resignation and resolve, Isaac’s family quickly packed. Hindle first helped her son, putting into a small cloth suitcase only the necessary clothing, some hard bread wrapped in newspaper, and soap. When Isaac attempted to place his Zayda’s cane into the suitcase, Hindle stopped him.

“We’ll come back later for the cane. It will be safe. I promise.”

Isaac was shocked. To leave behind such a precious legacy seemed almost sacrilegious to him, but he felt so helpless and confused at this point, whatever his parents said to do, he would follow. It did not seem like some kind of new adventure. It felt wrong. A sickening kind of heat rose up in his belly, and a tense heaviness settled in his chest, forcing him to breathe more deliberately. His whole body was tightening as he waited in his room, holding his grandfather’s cane, playing with the worn brass handle that had been rubbed by his Zayda’s strong firm hands in decades past. He sat on his bed, clutching the cane to his chest, resting his head on the handle, and stared into the darkness of rooms beyond his doorway.

Then he heard a truck and a Kübelwagen, a jeep-like military vehicle, and voices outside. There were shouts, orders, and suddenly Hindle appeared. She rushed into the room, putting her finger to her lip, and with the other hand pressed two objects into his palm. Then she kissed him, and, just as silently, walked out, indicating that it was time to leave. He looked into his hand and saw two gold rings. Somehow he understood that he was to keep them safe, and he quickly placed them on his fingers, so that they would not fall off. Then he picked up his cloth suitcase and walked out of his room, glancing back at the cane, as if he were abandoning some living friend. It leaned against his bedstead as it had for months.

His family was waiting for him at the door, each one carrying a meager suitcase

filled up to the precious six kilos allowed. Together they walked out into the swarming activity of the night.

They were met by glaring headlamps, shouts, a truck growling past covered with a powdery whiteness that smelled acrid and strong. Then a military vehicle pulled up and a tall, slim German officer jumped out and ordered Lazar to find a place in the line. He pointed to the left and when they looked, Isaac's family could make out an endless crowd of townspeople, shoulder to shoulder, huddling, shivering in the cold night air, all carrying their six kilos of treasures. Isaac had never seen so many people gathered together at once. The faces stretched out toward the distant road, more numberless than the trees. Everyone moved slowly but methodically, with soldiers flanking them on all sides, rifles strapped to their shoulders, shouting out commands to move faster when the place slackened.

Lazar grabbed his son's arm and drew him close, and then took his wife's hand and held it tightly. He waited until Aunt Rifka was alongside as well, and then they started out in the chilly, moonlit night.

The Germans had divided the Jewish inhabitants into groups of five hundred, by region, geography, and economic rank. Isaac's family, according to this system, had been selected to join the last group. Behind them Isaac could see a convoy of trucks, all piled high with material in the back, covered with canvas and kicking up clouds of white powder in their wake. At first, Lazar set the pace, walking slowly and deliberately, as if he were on a hike in the countryside with his son once again. But the chill of the night and the fearful white of the faces all about him, along with the deadly, sullen quiet of the marchers, made it clear to Isaac this was no ordinary hike.

After an hour into the walk, Aunt Rifka started to breathe painfully. She grabbed Lazar's arm and knelt to catch her breath. But when Lazar stopped to help, a soldier stepped up to them and pushed them on with his rifle.

"My aunt is exhausted. Let her rest."

Lazar pleaded but the German soldier shook his head and tapped Aunt Rifka on the shoulder with the rifle butt. She looked up, saw the cold indifference of the young soldier's face, and quickly stood up. She did not pause again, remembering the touch of the rifle against her shoulder.

In this night-long journey, military vehicles would pass up and down, stopping,

with soldiers running to receive messages from the driver, then starting up to speed them toward town. Behind Isaac, the trucks kept a steady pace, always on the heels of the marchers.

Once or twice, Isaac heard someone cry out for assistance, and then he thought he saw a figure running toward the bushes for relief. The crowd passed the spot where the figure had vanished and then, a few minutes later, Isaac heard what sounded like the crack of a whip or the snapping of branches in an ice storm. He couldn't make it out, but he saw his father shudder and he felt his father's grip tighten on his own hand. Each time some poor person cried out for some assistance and was allowed to leave the ranks and vanish in the brush at the side of the road, the group would pass the figure and never see that person again.

The soldiers kept urging the people on, forcing them to maintain the pace. After two hours of walking slowly and dragging the weight of six kilos along, Isaac could hear new sounds in the distance. He thought at first it was some screeching owl or a baying wolf. They were approaching the Sosenki and the noise of that great forest was always filled with animal sounds at night. But these cries in the distance and the sounds, the electric crackle followed by a booming echo, were unmistakable. These were human voices crying out, and the other sounds were gunshots.

With that realization and the sight of the white birches appearing dimly under the moonlight, Isaac listened as the soldiers shouted new orders. They were orders blurted out in three languages—German, Polish, Ukrainian. Isaac understood all of them. The message was the same.

“Stop. Put down your luggage. Place it at the side of the road and undress. Immediately. Now!”

Lazar looked startled. Others turned to him questioningly and he tried to approach an officer to inquire what this new command meant. But as he left the road, the soldier lifted his rifle to his shoulder, pointing it at Lazar. “Get back in line and undress.” He was a young Ukrainian from a nearby village, and his rifle shook nervously in his hand. Lazar retreated back.

Again the sound of animal-like screeches and cries, followed by that icy snap of electricity, a sudden crackle, and the jolt of an echo reverberating over the heads of everyone.

They did not move now, but the soldiers came at them with guns and pistols, pushing, slapping, forcing them to undress and ripping the luggage from their hands. Isaac's aunt could not stand it any longer and fell to her knees, crying. Hindle helped her up just before the soldiers spotted her and then, almost with a motherly tenderness, Hindle began to unbutton her blouse. Aunt Rifka did not protest. Everyone about her had begun to undress under the lashing voices and gestures of the soldiers. But Isaac could not look. A wave of nausea and embarrassment swept over him. He was both terrified and humiliated, and for a moment, his fingers seemed paralyzed, unable to open shirts or unbuckle pants. Lazar saw this and came toward him. He embraced his son and Isaac, pressing close to his father's chest, could hear the pounding of his heart. He had never heard his father's heart before and it was like some animal in flight, racing out of control. When he looked up, Lazar was crying, but he smiled at his son and kissed him. Then he turned to his wife, took her in his arms and kissed her many times. They were half undressed by now, stumbling, groping in the dark, and all about, Isaac could hear cries and sobs, the heaving of the sick, the shrieks and plaintive appeals to loved ones and to God.

The movement became even more regimented. Soldiers appeared at their backs, kicking away the luggage and pushing their naked bodies forward toward a dark shadowy area just beyond the rise. In all the confusion Isaac did not see nakedness, just the fear in the eyes, the horror and degradation in the mouth. He was cold, and his mother, her skin beautiful and smooth in the smoky moonlight, put her arm around Isaac. Whatever shame Isaac might have felt vanished. He just wanted to be as near to his mother and father as he could be in these harrowing and bewildering moments.

Then the screams began again and just ahead Isaac could see, stretched out in a row, left and right of him as far as he could make out in the moonlight, double lines of naked bodies, cowering, clutching themselves in the last desperate gestures of modesty. Behind him, SS officers and Ukrainian police stood with revolvers drawn, rifles pointed and machine guns readied. The trucks and the military vehicles shined their headlamps on the bodies, and with a shout up and down the line, the firing began. The bodies jolted forward with the crack of the bullets and vanished into the earth. Isaac could not see that far ahead, but in the glare of the headlights, he could make out the details of the horror. His body was flushed with a sudden heat, a fever that made him sweat suddenly, then shake.

His throat tightened, until he could not speak or swallow.

Crowding closer to his father and mother, he looked around for some sign of reality. This was happening so fast, so systematically, it was like he had been caught up in someone else's life.

Another double line formed and the soldiers pushed Isaac and his parents farther toward the front and the blazing lights. There were screams and shrieking all about now, before the round of gunshots and after. It was maddening, deafening. Not far from Isaac, a child of three was ripped from his mother's arms and the mother was shoved forward toward the front. She screamed and reached for the child, but the soldier tossed the child into the air and it fell, disappearing into the darkness up ahead.

Another volley of shots—machine guns, revolvers, rifles—and with a hideous regularity, the next two lines of naked bodies were thrust forward.

Isaac could now see all the way in front. Just beyond the victims stood a gaping trench, the one that took the workers a week to dig. It was filled with bodies in the most horrible postures of death. Arms jutted out, eyes stared in shock, torso pressed down on torso with such enormity that infants and the smallest children were simply tossed in letting the fatal weight of the adult bodies on top crush and suffocate them.

When Isaac looked up, he saw his father's face in the light, strangely defiant, jaw set hard. Even in his nakedness, Lazar displayed no shame. It was their turn next. The gunmen were in a hurry. Some had grown weary, some almost crazed by the constant slaughter. Many had already opened cardboard suitcases and cloth satchels to search for valuables and money, scattering clothes and personal belongings into the air. But the killing continued with demonic efficiency.

It was at that moment, Lazar broke the line, grabbed a young German soldier standing at the trench, and demanded "Kill me first! Now! I don't want to see my family killed. Do it now!"

He grabbed the leather belt strapped diagonal across the soldier's chest, practically pulling him into the bloody trench. But the soldier regained his balance and shoved Lazar back, angrily. He stumbled into the arms of Hindle, who held him tearfully. Isaac could not bear the look of such pain and suffering in the faces of his father and mother. He could not stand the sight of horror one more second,

and he rushed forward, breaking from the line, hurling himself at the same soldier his father had just confronted. The German gunman was caught off guard, a look of panic in his eyes. Practically clutching at the soldier's collar, Isaac shouted insistently, almost angrily, "I can't stand seeing my parents die. Kill me ... now!"

For a brief second, he caught sight of the vulnerable figures of his parents with this aunt behind them, her back to the trenches, unable to contemplate the nightmare. In that instant, as Isaac tried to fix the image of his loved ones in his mind forever, the young German gunman pushed him away in a rage, raised his revolver, aimed hurriedly at Isaac's head and squeezed the trigger. There was a thunderous roar. The revolver spent its shell, and then all sound stopped abruptly as Isaac dropped into unconsciousness.

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