

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

JAMES ROLLINS

AUTHOR OF MAP OF BONES

BLACK ORDER



BLACK ORDER

A Σ SIGMA FORCE NOVEL

JAMES ROLLINS

 HarperCollins e-books

TO DAVID,
for all the adventures

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NOTE FROM THE HISTORICAL RECORD

In the last months of World War II, as Germany fell, a new war began among the Allies: to plunder the technology of Nazi scientists. A race between the Brits, Americans, French, and Russians was every country for itself. Patents were stolen: for new vacuum tubes, for exotic chemicals and plastics, even for pasteurizing milk with UV light. But many of the most sensitive patents disappeared into the well of deep black projects, like *Operation Paper Clip*, where hundreds of Nazi V-2 rocket scientists were recruited in secret and brought into the United States.

But the Germans did not give up their technology easily. They also fought to secure their secrets in the hopes of a rebirth of the Reich. Scientists were murdered, research labs destroyed, and blueprints hidden in caves, sunk to the bottom of lakes, and buried in crypts. All to keep them from the Allies.

The search became daunting. Nazi research and weapons labs numbered in the hundreds, many underground, spread across Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. One of the most mysterious was a converted mine outside the small mountain town of Breslau. The research at this facility was code-named *die Glocke* or “the Bell.” People in the surrounding countryside reported strange lights and mysterious illnesses and deaths.

The Russian forces were the first to reach the mine. It was deserted. All sixty-two scientists involved in the project had been shot. As for the device itself...it had vanished to God knows where.

All that is known for sure: the Bell was real.

NOTE FROM THE SCIENTIFIC RECORD

Life is stranger than any fiction. All the discussions raised in this novel about quantum mechanics, intelligent design, and evolution are based on facts.



The fact that evolution is the backbone of biology, and biology is thus in the peculiar position of being a science founded on an improved theory—is it then a science or faith?

—CHARLES DARWIN

Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

Who says I am not under the special protection of God?

—ADOLF HITLER

1945

MAY 4

6:22 A.M.

FORTRESS CITY OF Breslau, Poland

The body floated in the sludge that sluiced through the dank sewers. The corpse of a boy, bloated and rat gnawed, had been stripped of boots, pants, and shirt. Nothing went to waste in the besieged city.

SS *Obergruppenführer* Jakob Sporrenberg nudged past the corpse, stirring the filth. Offal and excrement. Blood and bile. The wet scarf tied around his nose and mouth did little to ward off the stench. This was what the great war had come to. The mighty reduced to crawling through sewers to escape. But he had his orders.

Overhead the double *crump-wump* of Russian artillery pummeled the city. Each explosion bruised his gut with its concussive shock. The Russians had broken down the gates, bombed the airport, and even now, tanks ground down the cobbled streets while transport carriers landed on Kaiserstrasse. The main thoroughfare had been converted into a landing strip by parallel rows of flaming oil barrels, adding their smoke to the already choked early morning skies, keeping dawn at bay. Fighting waged in every street, in every home, from attic to basement.

Every house a fortress.

That had been *Gauleiter* Hanke's final command to the populace. The city had to hold out as long as possible. The future of the Third Reich depended on it.

And on Jakob Sporrenberg.

"*Mach schnell,*" he urged the others behind him.

His unit of the *Sicherheitsdienst*—designation Special Evacuation