

Ken Follett

To: Clairebird@aol.com
Subject: RE: FW: Code to Zero

I'm going through your notes, and looking at some different ways of dealing with the points you raise. A few initial thoughts:

1. I agree that Dieter and Flick must be more aware of one another sooner, but I can't write another book about four people who were at college together before the war. However, there are several other ways of achieving the same end.

(I'm not sure you're right about my past books, by the way. In "Eye of the Needle", Godliman learned rather gradually about Faber, as Dieter learns about Flick in this outline; and of course Lucy did not meet Faber until half way through and did not realize he was an enemy until almost the end.)

2. I doubt whether anything would be achieved by starting the story later. The training period ought to give us a slower but more convincing build-up of suspense. Character flaws revealed in training will signal danger to come, so that we will go into the actual action with a stronger apprehension of danger; which will then be satisfied by actual scary events. However, I still have an open mind on this.

3. I will certainly bring in Churchill and Rommel and in fact have spent this morning checking where they were on these dates.

4. I thought I had already given Flick an impressive past, saying that she is a legend in the Resistance and in London for having survived so long. I don't really want her to have blown up two previous communications centres: that would make this one seem routine.

5. I like the idea of Dieter and Baecker both having fought under Rommel in Africa, though I'm not sure how they make the transition from that to being Gestapo interrogators; but I'll continue thinking about it.

6. Make the chateau more of a character? Perhaps, but not by giving it concrete fortifications. I did see a very weird gothic fantasy of a castle, with fairy-tale turrets and so on, north of Epernay. I couldn't even find the front entrance, but the gatehouse had a typical French notice saying the place was open at a small number of odd dates and times. I also saw a more typical 17th-century chateau that actually had a moat.

7. Barbara pointed out that the romance between Flick and Paul is a bit routine at the moment, and I'm trying to think of some more hazards to put in its way.

8. A thought of my own is that someone should tell Flick, on 15 May, that she has exactly 3 weeks to complete this task, otherwise it may be of no benefit; then the story will have a clock.

9. By the way, the story of Rommel's phone call to Hitler doesn't seem to be right. Rommel was not even in Normandy on the day of the invasion. The weather in the English Channel was so bad that he decided the invasion was impossible, and went to Germany. However, I can make something up that fits in with the true history.

Shall we meet at 12 noon on Wednesday 15 September at Writers House?

I presume Gipsy Trail is your country house, and that I'm sending this to Claire's email address because you haven't figured out how to pick up your own email yet....

Warm regards, as ever--
Ken.

-----Original Message-----

From: Clairebird@aol.com [mailto:Clairebird@aol.com]
Sent: 29 August 2000 01:57
To: kenprivate@ken-follett.com
Subject: Re: FW: Code to Zero